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MARY'S MEADOW

BY

JULIANA HORATIA EWING

AUTHOR OF

"JACKANAPES"—"THE STORY OF A SHORT LIFE"

ILLUSTRATED BY

GORDON BROWNE

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MARY'S MEADOW

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"It was a glorious night. The moon was rising round and large out of the mist, and dark against its brightness I could see the figure of the Old Squire pacing the pathway over Mary's Meadow."—*Page* 14.

Front.

FIFTY-FIFTH THOUSAND.

MARY'S MEADOW

AND

Letters from a Little Garden.

BY

JULIANA HORATIA EWING,

AUTHOR OF "JACKANAPES," "DADDY DARWIN'S DOVECOT," "THE STORY OF A SHORT LIFE," "LOB LIE-BY-THE-FIRE; OR, THE LUCK OF LINGBOROUGH," ETC., ETC.

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PREFACE.

"MARY'S MEADOW" first appeared in the numbers of *Aunt Judy's Magazine* from November 1883, to March 1884. It was the last serial story which Mrs. EWING wrote, and I believe the subject of it arose from the fact that in 1883, after having spent several years in moving from place to place, she went to live at Villa Ponente, Taunton, where she had a settled home with a garden, and was able to revert to the practical cultivation of flowers, which had been one of the favourite pursuits of her girlhood.

The Game of the Earthly Paradise was received with great delight by the readers of the story; one family of children adopted the word "Mary-meadowing" to describe the work which they did towards beautifying hedges and bare places; and my sister received many letters of enquiry about the various plants mentioned in her tale. These she answered in the *Correspondence* columns of the Magazine, and in July 1884, it was suggested that a "Parkinson Society" should be formed, whose objects were "to search out and cultivate old garden flowers which have become scarce; to exchange seeds and plants; to plant waste places with hardy flowers; to circulate books on gardening amongst the Members;" and further, "to try to prevent the extermination of rare wild flowers, as well as of garden treasures."

Reports of the Society, with correspondence on the exchanges of plants and books, and quaint local names of flowers, were given in the Magazine until it was brought to a close after Mrs. EWING'S death; but I am glad to say that the Society itself is still in existence, and any one who wishes to procure a copy of its Rules can do so by sending a stamped envelope to the Secretary, *Miss Alice Sargant*, 7, *Belsize Grove, N. W.* Miss SARGANT was the originator of the scheme, so its management remains in the best possible hands, and Professor OLIVER, of Kew Gardens, has consented to become President in Mrs. EWING'S place. She owed to him her first introduction to *Paradisi in sole Paradisus terrestris*, as well as many other kind acts of help on flower subjects.

The "Letters from a Little Garden" were published in *Aunt Judy's Magazine* between November 1884, and February 1885, and as they, as well as "Mary's Meadow," were due to the interest which my sister was taking in the tending of her own Earthly Paradise,—they are inserted in this volume, although they were left unfinished when the writer was called away to be—

"Fast in Thy Paradise, where no flower can wither!"

HORATIA K. F. GATTY.

May, 1886.

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NOTE.—If any readers of "Mary's Meadow" have been as completely puzzled as the writer was by the title of John Parkinson's old book, it may interest them to know that the question has been raised and answered in *Notes and Queries*.

I first saw the *Paradisi in sole Paradisus terrestris* at Kew, some years ago, and was much bewitched by its quaint charm. I grieve to say that I do not possess it; but an old friend and florist—the Rev. H. T. Ellacombe—was good enough to lend me his copy for reference, and to him I wrote for the meaning of the title. But his scholarship, and that of other learned friends, was quite at fault. My old friend's youthful energies (he will permit me to say that he is ninety-four) were not satisfied to rust in ignorance, and he wrote to *Notes and Queries* on the subject, and has been twice answered. It is an absurd play upon words, after the fashion of John Parkinson's day. Paradise, as AUNT JUDY'S readers may know, is originally an Eastern word, meaning a park, or pleasure ground. I am ashamed to say that the knowledge of this fact did not help me to the pun. *Paradisi in sole Paradisus terrestris* means Park—in—son's Earthly Paradise!

J. H. E., *February*, 1884.

How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
Are Thy returns! ev'n as the flowers in spring;
To which, besides their own demean,
The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring.
Grief melts away
Like snow in May,
As if there were no such cold thing.

Who would have thought my shrivel'd heart
Could have recover'd greenness? It was gone
Quite under ground; as flowers depart
To see their mother-root, when they have blown;
Where they together
All the hard weather,
Dead to the world, keep house unknown.

* * * * *

O that I once past changing were,
Fast in Thy Paradise, where no flower can wither!
Many a spring I shoot up fair,
Offering at heaven, growing and groaning thither;
Nor doth my flower
Want a spring-shower,
My sins and I joining together.

* * * * *

These are Thy wonders, Lord of love,
To make us see we are but flowers that glide:
Which when we once can find and prove,
Thou hast a garden for us, where to bide.
Who would be more,
Swelling through store,
Forfeit their Paradise by their pride.

GEORGE HERBERT.

CHAPTER I.

MOTHER is always trying to make us love our neighbours as ourselves.

She does so despise us for greediness, or grudging, or snatching, or not sharing what we have got, or taking the best and leaving the rest, or helping ourselves first, or pushing forward, or praising Number One, or being Dogs in the Manger, or anything selfish. And we cannot bear her to despise us!

We despise being selfish, too; but very often we forget. Besides, it is sometimes rather difficult to love your neighbour as yourself when you want a thing very much; and Arthur says he believes it is particularly difficult if it is your next-door-neighbour, and that that is why Father and the Old Squire quarrelled about the footpath through Mary's Meadow.

The Old Squire is not really his name, but that is what people call him. He is very rich. His place comes next to ours, and it is much bigger, and he has quantities of fields, and Father has only got a few; but there are two fields beyond Mary's Meadow which belong to Father, though the Old Squire wanted to buy them. Father would not sell them, and he says he has a right of way through Mary's Meadow to go to his fields, but the Old Squire says he has nothing of the kind, and that is what they quarrelled about.

Arthur says if you quarrel, and are too grown-up to punch each other's heads, you go to law; and if going to law doesn't make it up, you appeal. They went to law, I know, for Mother cried about it; and I suppose it did not make it up, for the Old Squire appealed.

After that he used to ride about all day on his grey horse, with Saxon, his yellow bull-dog, following him, to see that we did not trespass on Mary's Meadow. I think he thought that if we children were there, Saxon would frighten us, for I do not suppose he knew that we knew him. But Saxon used often to come with the Old Squire's Scotch Gardener to see our gardener, and when they were looking at the wall fruit, Saxon used to come snuffing after us.

He is the nicest dog I know. He looks very savage, but he is only very funny. His lower jaw sticks out, which makes him grin, and some people think he is gnashing his teeth with rage. We think it looks as if he were laughing—like Mother Hubbard's dog, when she brought home his coffin, and he wasn't dead—but it really is only the shape of his jaw. I loved Saxon the first day I saw him, and he likes me, and licks my face. But what he likes best of all are Bath Oliver Biscuits.

One day the Scotch Gardener saw me feeding him, and he pulled his red beard, and said, "Ye do weel to mak hay while the sun shines, Saxon, my man. There's sma' sight o' young leddies and sweet cakes at hame for ye!" And Saxon grinned, and wagged his tail, and the Scotch Gardener touched his hat to me, and took him away.

The Old Squire's Weeding Woman is our nursery-maid's aunt. She is not very old, but she looks so, because she has lost her teeth, and is bent nearly double. She wears a large hood, and carries a big basket, which she puts down outside the nursery door when she comes to tea with Bessy. If it is a fine afternoon, and we are gardening, she lets us borrow the basket, and then we play at being weeding women in each other's gardens.

She tells Bessy about the Old Squire. She says—"He do be a real old skinflint, the Old Zquire a be!" But she thinks it—"zim as if 'twas having ne'er a wife nor child for to keep the natur in 'un, so his heart do zim to shrivel, like they walnuts Butler tells us of as a zets down for desart. The Old Zquire he mostly eats ne'er a one now 's teeth be so bad. But a counts them every night when's desart's done. And a keeps 'em till the karnels be mowldy, and a keeps 'em till they be dry, and a keeps 'em till they be dust; and when the karnels is dust, a cracks aal the lot of 'em when desart's done, zo's no one mayn't have no good of they walnuts, since they be no good to he."

Arthur can imitate the Weeding Woman exactly, and he can imitate the Scotch Gardener, too Chris (that is Christopher, our youngest brother), is very fond of "The Zquire and the Walnuts." He gets nuts,

or anything, like shells or bits of flower-pots, that will break, and something to hit with, and when Arthur comes to "*The karnels is dust*," Chris smashes everything before him, shouting, "*A cracks aal the lot of 'em*," and then he throws the bits all over the place, with "*They be no good to he.*"

Father laughed very much when he heard Arthur do the Weeding Woman, and Mother could not help laughing, too; but she did not like it, because she does not like us to repeat servants' gossip.

The Weeding Woman is a great gossip. She gossips all the time she is having her tea, and it is generally about the Old Squire. She used to tell Bessy that his flowers bloomed themselves to death, and the fruit rotted on the walls, because he would let nothing be picked, and gave nothing away, except now and then a grand present of fruit to Lady Catherine, for which the old lady returned no thanks, but only a rude message to say that his peaches were over-ripe, and he had better have sent the grapes to the Infirmary. Adela asked—"Why is the Old Squire so kind to Lady Catherine?" and Father said—"Because we are so fond of Lords and Ladies in this part of the country." I thought he meant the lords and ladies in the hedges, for we are very fond of them. But he didn't. He meant real lords and ladies.

There are splendid lords and ladies in the hedges of Mary's Meadow. I never can make up my mind when I like them best. In April and May, when they have smooth plum-coloured coats and pale green cowls, and push up out of last year's dry leaves, or in August and September, when their hoods have fallen away, and their red berries shine through the dusty grass and nettles that have been growing up round them all the summer out of the ditch.

Flowers were one reason for our wanting to go to Mary's Meadow. Another reason was the nightingale. There was one that used always to sing there, and Mother had made us a story about it.

We are very fond of fairy books, and one of our greatest favourites is Bechstein's "As Pretty as Seven." It has very nice pictures, and we particularly like "The Man in the Moon, and How He Came There;" but the story doesn't end well, for he came there by gathering sticks on Sunday, and then scoffing about it, and he has been there ever since. But Mother made us a new fairy tale about the nightingale in Mary's Meadow being the naughty woodcutter's only child, who was turned into a little brown bird that lives on in the woods, and sits on a tree on summer nights, and sings to its father up in the moon.

But after our Father and the Old Squire went to law, Mother told

us we must be content with hearing the nightingale from a distance. We did not really know about the lawsuit then, we only understood that the Old Squire was rather crosser than usual; and we rather resented being warned not to go into Mary's Meadow, especially as Father kept saying we had a perfect right so to do. I thought that Mother was probably afraid of Saxon being set at us, and of course I had no fears about him. Indeed, I used to wish that it could happen that the Old Squire, riding after me as full of fury as King Padella in the "Rose and the Ring," might set Saxon on me, as the lions were let loose to eat the Princess Rosalba. "Instead of devouring her with their great teeth, it was with kisses they gobbled her up. They licked her pretty feet, they nuzzled their noses in her lap," and she put her arms "round their tawny necks and kissed them." Saxon gobbles us with kisses, and nuzzles his nose, and we put our arms round his tawny neck. What a surprise it would be to the Old Squire to see him! And then I wondered if my feet were as pretty as Rosalba's, and I thought they were, and I wondered if Saxon would lick them, supposing that by any possibility it could ever happen that I should be barefoot in Mary's Meadow at the mercy of the Old Squire and his bull-dog.

One does not, as a rule, begin to go to bed by letting down one's hair, and taking off one's shoes and stockings. But one night I was silly enough to do this, just to see if I looked (in the mirror) at all like the picture of Rosalba in the "Rose and the Ring." I was trying to see my feet as well as my hair, when I heard Arthur jumping the three steps in the middle of the passage between his room and mine. I had only just time to spring into the window seat, and tuck my feet under me, when he gave a hasty knock, and bounced in with his telescope in his hand.

"Oh, Mary," he cried, "I want you to see the Old Squire, with a great-coat over his evening clothes, and a squosh hat, marching up and down Mary's Meadow."

And he pulled up my blind, and threw open the window, and arranged the telescope for me.

It was a glorious night. The moon was rising round and large out of the mist, and dark against its brightness I could see the figure of the Old Squire pacing the pathway over Mary's Meadow.

Saxon was not there; but on a slender branch of a tree in the hedgerow sat the nightingale, singing to comfort the poor, lonely old Man in the Moon.

CHAPTER II.

LADY CATHERINE is Mother's aunt by marriage, and Mother is one of the few people she is not rude to.

She is very rude, and yet she is very kind, especially to the poor. But she does kind things so rudely, that people now and then wish that she would mind her own business instead. Father says so, though Mother would say that that is gossip. But I think sometimes that Mother is thinking of Aunt Catherine when she tells us that in kindness it is not enough to be good to others, one should also learn to be gracious.

Mother thought she was very rude to *her* once, when she said, quite out loud, that Father is very ill-tempered, and that, if Mother had not the temper of an angel, the house could never hold together. Mother was very angry, but Father did not mind. He says our house will hold together much longer than most houses, because he swore at the workmen, and went to law with the builder for using dirt instead of mortar, so the builder had to pull down what was done wrong, and do it right; and Father says he knows he has a bad temper, but he does not mean to pull the house over our heads at present, unless he has to get bricks out to heave at Lady Catherine if she becomes quite unbearable.

We do not like dear Father to be called bad-tempered. He comes home cross sometimes, and then we have to be very quiet, and keep out of the way; and sometimes he goes out rather cross, but not always. It was what Chris said about that that pleased Lady Catherine so much.

It was one day when Father came home cross, and was very much vexed to find us playing about the house. Arthur had got a new adventure book, and he had been reading to us about the West Coast of Africa, and niggers, and tom-toms, and "going Fantee;" and James gave him a lot of old corks out of the pantry, and let him burn them in a candle. It rained, and we could not go out; so we all blacked our faces with burnt cork, and played at the West Coast in one of the back passages, and at James being the captain of a slave ship because he tried to catch us when we beat the tom-toms too near him when he was cleaning the plate, to make him give us rouge and whitening to tattoo with.

Dear Father came home rather earlier than we expected, and rather cross. Chris did not hear the front door, because his ears were pinched up with tying curtain rings on to them, and just at that minute he shouted, "I go Fantee!" and tore his pinafore right up the middle, and burst into the front hall with it hanging in two pieces by the arm-holes, his eyes shut, and a good grab of James's rouge powder smudged on his nose, yelling and playing the tom-tom on what is left of Arthur's drum.

Father was very angry indeed, and Chris was sent to bed, and not allowed to go down to dessert; and Lady Catherine was dining at our house, so he missed her.

Next time she called, and saw Chris, she asked him why he had not been at dessert that night. Mother looked at Chris, and said, "Why was it, Chris? Tell Aunt Catherine." Mother thought he would say, "Because I tore my pinafore, and made a noise in the front hall." But he smiled, the grave way Chris does, and said, "Because Father came home cross." And Lady Catherine was pleased, but Mother was vexed.

I am quite sure Chris meant no harm, but he does say very funny things. Perhaps it is because his head is rather large for his body, with some water having got into his brain when he was very little, so that we have to take great care of him. And though he does say very odd things, very slowly, I do not think any one of us tries harder to be good.

I remember once Mother had been trying to make us forgive each other's trespasses, and Arthur would say that you cannot *make* yourself feel kindly to them that trespass against you; and Mother said if you make yourself do right, then at last you get to feel right; and it was very soon after this that Harry and Christopher quarrelled, and would

not forgive each other's trespasses in the least, in spite of all that I could do to try and make peace between them.

Chris went off in the sulks, but after a long time I came upon him in the toy-cupboard, looking rather pale and very large-headed, and winding up his new American top, and talking to himself.

When he talks to himself he mutters, so I could only just hear what he was saying, and he said it over and over again :

"*Dos first and feels afterwards.*"

"What are you doing, Chris?" I asked.

"I'm getting ready my new top to give to Harry. *Dos first and feels afterwards.*"

"Well," I said, "Christopher, you *are* a good boy."

"I should like to punch his head," said Chris—and he said it in just the same sing-song tone—"but I'm getting the top ready. *Dos first and feels afterwards.*"

And he went on winding and muttering.

Afterwards he told me that the "feels" came sooner than he expected. Harry wouldn't take his top, and they made up their quarrel.

Christopher is very simple, but sometimes we think he is also a little sly. He can make very wily excuses about things he does not like.

He does not like Nurse to hold back his head and wash his face ; and at last one day she let him go downstairs with a dirty face, and then complained to Mother. So Mother asked Chris why he was so naughty about having his face washed, and he said, quite gravely, "I do think it would be *such pity* if the water got into my head again by accident." Mother did not know he had ever heard about it, but she said, "Oh, Chris ! Chris ! that's one of your excuses." And he said, "It's not my *'scusis.* She lets a good deal get in—at my ears—and lather too."

But, with all his whimsical ways, Lady Catherine is devoted to Christopher. She likes him far better than any one of us, and he is very fond of her ; and they say quite rude things to each other all along. And Father says it is very lucky, for if she had not been so fond of Chris, and so ready to take him too, Mother would never have been persuaded to leave us when Aunt Catherine took them to the South of France.

Mother had been very unwell for a long time. She has so many worries, and Dr. Solomon said she ought to avoid worry, and Aunt

Catherine said worries were killing her, and Father said "Pshaw!" and Aunt Catherine said "Care killed the cat," and that a cat has nine lives, and a woman has only one; and then Mother got worse, and Aunt Catherine wanted to take her abroad, and she wouldn't go; and then Christopher was ill, and Aunt Catherine said she would take him too, if only Mother would go with her; and Dr. Solomon said it might be the turning-point of his health, and Father said, "the turning-point which way?" but he thanked Lady Catherine, and they didn't quarrel; and so Mother yielded, and it was settled that they should go.

Before they went, Mother spoke to me, and told me I must be a Little Mother to the others whilst she was away. She hoped we should all try to please Father, and to be unselfish with each other; but she expected me to try far harder than the others, and never to think of myself at all, so that I might fill her place whilst she was away. So I promised to try, and I did.

We missed Christopher sadly. And Saxon missed him. The first time Saxon came to see us after Mother and Chris went away, we told him all about it, and he looked very sorry. Then we said that he should be our brother in Christopher's stead, whilst Chris was away; and he looked very much pleased, and wagged his tail, and licked our faces all round. So we told him to come and see us very often.

He did not, but we do not think it was his fault. He is chained up so much.

One day Arthur and I were walking down the road outside the Old Squire's stables, and Saxon smelt us, and we could hear him run and rattle his chain, and he gave deep, soft barks.

Arthur laughed. He said, "Do you hear Saxon, Mary? Now I dare say the Old Squire thinks he smells tramps and wants to bite them. He doesn't know that Saxon smells his new sister and brother, and wishes he could go out walking with them in Mary's Meadow."

CHAPTER III.

NOTHING comforted us so much whilst Mother and Chris were away as being allowed to play in the Library.

We were not usually allowed to be there so often, but when we asked Father he gave us leave to amuse ourselves there at the time when Mother would have had us with her, provided that we did not bother him or hurt the books. We did not hurt the books, and in the end we were allowed to go there as much as we liked.

We have plenty of books of our own, and we have new ones very often: on birthdays and at Christmas. Sometimes they are interesting, and sometimes they are disappointing. Most of them have pretty pictures. It was because we had been rather unlucky for some time, and had had disappointing ones on our birthdays, that Arthur said to me, "Look here, Mary, I'm not going to read any books now but grown-up ones, unless it is an Adventure Book. I'm sick of books for young people, there's so much *stuff* in them."

We call it *stuff* when there seems to be going to be a story and it comes to nothing but talk; and we call it *stuff* when there is a very interesting picture, and you read to see what it is about, and the reading does not tell you, or tells you wrong.

Both Arthur and Christopher had had disappointments in their books on their birthdays.

Arthur jumped at his book at first, because there were Japanese pictures in it, and Uncle Charley had just been staying with us, and had brought beautiful Japanese pictures with him, and had told us Japanese fairy tales, and they were as good as Bechstein. So Arthur was full of Japan.

The most beautiful picture of all was of a stork, high up in a tall

tall pine tree, and the branches of the pine tree, and the cones, and the pine needles were most beautifully drawn; and there was a nest with young storks in it, and behind the stork and the nest and the tall pin- the sun was blazing with all his rays. And Uncle Charley told us the story to it, and it was called "the Nest of the Stork."

So when Arthur saw a stork standing among pine needles in his new book he shouted with delight, though the pine needles were rather badly done, with thick strokes. But presently he said, "It's not nearly so good a stork as Uncle Charley's. And where's the stem of the pine? It looks as if the stork were on the ground and on the top of the pine tree too, and there's no nest. And there's no sun. And, oh! Mary, what do you think is written under it? '*Crane and Water-reeds.*' Well, I do call that a sell!"

Christopher's disappointment was quite as bad. Mother gave him a book with very nice pictures, particularly of beasts. The chief reason she got it for him was that there was such a very good picture of a toad, and Chris is so fond of toads. For months he made friends with one in the garden. It used to crawl away from him, and he used to creep after it, talking to it, and then it used to half begin to crawl up the garden wall, and stand so, on its hind legs, and let Chris rub its wrinkled back. The toad in the picture was exactly like Christopher's toad, and he ran about the house with the book in his arms begging us to read him the story about Dear Toady.

We were all busy but Arthur, and he said, "I want to go on with my water-wheel." But Mother said, "Don't be selfish, Arthur." And he said, "I forgot. All right, Chris; bring me the book." So they went and sat in the conservatory, not to disturb anyone. But very soon they came back, Chris crying, and saying, "It couldn't be the right one, Arthur;" and Arthur frowning, and saying, "It *is* the right story; but it's *stuff*. I'll tell you what that book's good for, Chris. To paint the pictures. And you've got a new paint-box." So Mother said, "What's the matter?" And Arthur said, "Chris thinks I haven't read him the right story to his Toad Picture. But I have, and what do you think it's about? It's about the silliest little girl you can imagine—a regular mawk of a girl—*and a Frog*. Not a toad, but a F. R. O. G. frog! A regular hop, skip, jumping frog!"

Arthur hopped round the room, but Chris cried bitterly. So Arthur ran up to him and kissed him, and said, "Don't cry, old chap. I'll tell you what I'll do. You get Mary to cut out a lot of the leaves of your

book that have no pictures, and that will make it like a real scrap-book; and then I'll give you a lot of my scraps and pictures to paste over what's left of the stories, and you'll have such a painting-book as you never had in all your life before."

So we did. And Arthur was very good, for he gave Chris pictures that I know he prized, because Chris liked them. But the very first picture he gave him was the "Crane and Water-reeds."

I thought it so good of Arthur to be so nice with Chris that I wished I could have helped him over his water-wheel. He had put Japan out of his head since the disappointment, and spent all his play-time in making mills and machinery. He did grind some corn into flour once, but it was not at all white. He said that was because the bran was left in. But it was not only bran in Arthur's flour. There was a good deal of sand too, from his millstones being made of sand-stone, which he thought would not matter. But it grinds off.

Down in the valley, below Mary's Meadow, runs the Ladybrook, which turns the old water-wheel of Mary's Mill. It is a very picturesque old mill, and Mother has made beautiful sketches of it. She caught the last cold she got before going abroad with sketching it—the day we had a most delightful picnic there, and went about in the punt. And from that afternoon Arthur made up his mind that his next mill should be a water mill.

The reason I am no good at helping Arthur about his mills is that I am stupid about machinery; and I was so vexed not to help him, that when I saw a book in the library which I thought would do so, I did not stop to take it out, for it was in four very large volumes, but ran off at once to tell Arthur.

He said, "What *is* the matter, Mary?"

I said, "Oh, Arthur! I've found a book that will tell you all about mills; and it is the nicest smelling book in the Library."

"The nicest *smelling?* What's that got to do with mills?"

"Nothing, of course. But it's bound in russia, and I am so fond of the smell of russia. But that's nothing. It's a Miller's Dictionary, and it is in four huge volumes, 'with plates.' I should think you could look out all about every kind of mill there ever was a miller to."

"If the plates give sections and diagrams"—Arthur began, but I did not hear the rest, for he started off for the library at once, and I ran after him.

But when we got Miller's Dictionary on the floor, how he did

tease me! For there was nothing about mills or millers in it. It was a Gardener's and Botanist's Dictionary, by Philip Miller; and the plates were plates of flowers, very truly drawn, like the pine tree in Uncle Charley's Jap. picture. There were some sections too, but they were sections of greenhouses, not of any kinds of mills or machinery.

The odd thing was that it turned out a kind of help to Arthur after all. For we got so much interested in it that it roused us up about our gardens. We are all very fond of flowers, I most of all. And at last Arthur said he thought that miniature mills were really rather humbugging things, and it would be much easier and more useful to build a cold frame to keep choice auriculas and *half-hardies* in.

When we took up our gardens so hotly, Harry and Adela took up theirs, and we did a great deal, for the weather was fine.

We were surprised to find that the Old Squire's Scotch Gardener knew Miller's Gardener's Dictionary quite well. He said, "It's a gran' wurrk!" (Arthur can say it just like him.)

One day he wished he could see it, and smell the russia binding; he said he liked to feel a nice smell. Father was away, and we were by ourselves, so we invited him into the library. Saxon wanted to come in too, but the gardener was very cross with him, and sent him out; and he sat on the mat outside and dribbled with longing to get in, and thudded his stiff tail whenever he saw anyone through the doorway.

The Scotch Gardener enjoyed himself very much, and he explained a lot of things to Arthur, and helped us to put away the Dictionary when we had done with it.

When he took up his hat to go, he gave one long look all round the library. Then he turned to Arthur (and Saxon took advantage of this to wag his way in and join the party), and said, "It's a rare privilege, the free entry of a book chamber like this. I'm hoping, young gentleman, that you're not insensible of it?"

Then he caught sight of Saxon, and beat him out of the room with his hat.

But he came back himself to say, that it might just happen that he would be glad now and again to hear what was said about this or that plant (of which he would write down the botanical name) in these noble volumes.

So we told him that if he would bring Saxon to see us pretty often, we would look out anything he wanted to know about in Miller's Gardener's Dictionary.

"The Scotch Gardener enjoyed himself very much, and he explained a lot of things to Arthur, and helped us to put away the Dictionary when we had done with it."—*Page* 22.

CHAPTER IV.

LOOKING round the library one day, to see if I could see any more books about gardening, I found the Book of Paradise.

It is a very old book, and very queer. It has a brown leather back — not russia — and stiff little gold flowers and ornaments all the way down, where Miller's Dictionary has gold swans in crowns, and ornaments.

There are a good many old books in the library, but they are not generally very interesting — at least not to us. So when I found that though this one had a Latin name on the title page, it was written in English, and that though it seemed to be about Paradise. it was really about a garden, and quite common flowers, I was delighted, for I always have cared more for gardening and flowers than for any other amusement, long before we found Miller's Gardener's Dictionary. And the Book of Paradise is much smaller than the dictionary, and easier to hold. And I like old, queer things, and it is very old and queer.

The Latin name is "*Paradisi in sole, Paradisus terrestris,*" which we do not any of us understand, though we are all learning Latin ; so we call it the Book of Paradise. But the English name is—"Or a

Garden of all sorts of pleasant flowers which our English ayre will permitt to be noursed up;" and on the top of every page is written "The Garden of Pleasant Flowers," and it says—"Collected by John Parkinson, Apothecary of London, and the King's Herbarist, 1629."

I had to think a minute to remember who was the king then, and it was King Charles I.; so then I knew that it was Queen Henrietta to whom the book was dedicated. This was the dedication:—

"To the Queen's most Excellent Majesty.

"Madame.—Knowing your Majesty so much delighted with all the fair flowers of a Garden, and furnished with them as far beyond others as you are eminent before them; this my Work of a Garden long before this intended to be published, and but now only finished, seemed as it were destined to be first offered into your Highness's hands as of right, challenging the propriety of Patronage from all others. Accept, I beseech your Majesty, this speaking Garden, that may inform you in all the particulars of your store as well as wants, when you cannot see any of them fresh upon the ground: and it shall further encourage him to accomplish the remainder; who in praying that your Highness may enjoy the heavenly Paradise, after many years' fruition of this earthly, submitteth to be your Majesties,

"In all humble devotion,

"John Parkinson."

We like queer old things like this, they are so funny! I liked the Dedication, and I wondered if the Queen's Garden really was an Earthly Paradise, and whether she did enjoy reading John Parkinson's book about flowers in the winter time, when her own flowers were no longer "fresh upon the ground." And then I wondered what flowers she had, and I looked out a great many of our chief favourites, and she had several kinds of them.

We are particulary fond of Daffodils, and she had several kinds of Daffodils, from the "Primrose Peerlesse,"* "of a sweet but stuffing scent," to "the least Daffodil of all,"† which the book says "was brought to us by a Frenchman called Francis le Vean, the honestest root-gatherer that ever came over to us."

The Queen had Cowslips too, though our gardener despised them when he saw them in my garden. I dug mine up in Mary's Meadow

* *Narcissus medio lutens vulgaris.*

† *Narcissus minimus*, Parkinson. *N. minor*, Miller.

before Father and the Old Squire went to law; but they were only common Cowslips, with one Oxlip, by good luck. In the Earthly Paradise there were "double Cowslips, one within another." And they were called Hose-in-Hose. I wished I had Hose-in-Hose.

Arthur was quite as much delighted with the Book of Paradise as I. He said, "Isn't it funny to think of Queen Henrietta Maria gardening. I wonder if she went trailing up and down the walks looking like that picture of her we saw when you and I were in London with Mother about our teeth, and went to see the Loan Collection of Old Masters. I wonder if the Dwarf picked the flowers for her. I do wonder what Apothecary John Parkinson looked like when he offered his Speaking Garden into her Highnesses' hands. And what beautiful hands she had! Do you remember the picture, Mary? It was by Vandyke."

I remembered it quite well.

That afternoon the others could not amuse themselves, and wanted me to tell them a story. They do not like old stories too often, and it is rather difficult to invent new ones. Sometimes we do it by turns. We sit in a circle and one of us begins, and the next must add something, and so we go on. But that way does not make a good plot. My head was so full of the Book of Paradise that afternoon that I could not think of a story, but I said I would begin one. So I began:

"Once upon a time there was a Queen—"

"How was she dressed?" asked Adela, who thinks a good deal about dress.

"She had a beautiful dark-blue satin robe."

"Princesse shape?" inquired Adela.

"No; Queen's shape," said Arthur. "Drive on, Mary."

"And lace ruffles falling back from her Highness' hands—"

"Sweet!" murmured Adela.

"And a high hat, with plumes, on her head, and—

"A very low dwarf at her heels," added Arthur.

"Was there really a dwarf, Mary?" asked Harry.

"There was," said I.

"Had he a hump, or was he only a plain dwarf?"

"He was a very plain dwarf," said Arthur.

"Does Arthur know the story, Mary?"

"No, Harry, he doesn't; and he oughtn't to interfere till I come to a stop."

"Beg pardon, Mary. Drive on."

"The Queen was very much delighted with all fair flowers, and she had a garden so full of them that it was called the Earthly Paradise."

There was a long-drawn and general "Oh!" of admiration.

"But though she was a Queen, she couldn't have flowers in the winter, not even in an Earthly Paradise."

"Don't you suppose she had a greenhouse, by-the-bye, Mary?" said Arthur.

"Oh, Arthur," cried Harry, "I do wish you'd be quiet: when you know it's a fairy story, and that Queens of that sort never had greenhouses or anything like we have now."

"And so the King's Apothecary and Herbarist, whose name was John Parkinson—"

"I shouldn't have thought he would have had a common name like that," said Harry.

"Bessy's name is Parkinson," said Adela.

"Well, I can't help it; his name *was* John Parkinson."

"Drive on, Mary!" said Arthur.

"And he made her a book, called the Book of Paradise, in which there were pictures and written accounts of her flowers, so that when she could not see any of them fresh upon the ground, she could read about them, and think about them, and count up how many she had."

"Ah, but she couldn't tell. Some of them might have died in the winter," said Adela.

"Ah, but some of the others might have got little ones at their roots," said Harry. "So that would make up."

I said nothing. I was glad of the diversion, for I could not think how to go on with the story. Before I quite gave in, Harry luckily asked, "Was there a Weeding Woman in the Earthly Paradise?"

"There was," said I.

"How was she dressed?" asked Adela.

"She had a dress the colour of common earth."

"Princesse shape?" inquired Arthur.

"No; Weeding Woman shape. Arthur, I wish you wouldn't—"

"All right, Mary. Drive on."

"And a little shawl, that had partly the colour of grass, and partly the colour of hay."

"*Hay, dear!*" interpolated Arthur, exactly imitating a well-known sigh peculiar to Bessy's aunt.

"Was her bonnet like our weeding woman's bonnet?" asked Adela, in a disappointed tone.

"Much larger," said I, "and the colour of a Marigold."

Adela looked happier. "Strings the same?" she asked.

"No. One string canary-colour, and the other white."

"And a basket?" asked Harry.

"Yes, a basket, of course. Well, the Queen had all sorts of flowers in her garden. Some of them were natives of the country, and some of them were brought to her from countries far away, by men called Root-gatherers. There were very beautiful Daffodils in the Earthly Paradise, but the smallest of all the Daffodils—"

"A Dwarf, like the Hunchback?" said Harry.

"The Dwarf Daffodil of all was brought to her by a man called Francis le Vean."

"That was a *much* nicer name than John Parkinson," said Harry.

"And he was the honestest Root-gatherer that ever brought foreign flowers into the Earthly Paradise."

"Then I love him!" said Harry.

CHAPTER V.

ONE sometimes thinks it is very easy to be good, and then there comes something which makes it very hard.

I liked being a Little Mother to the others, and almost enjoyed giving way to them. "Others first, Little Mothers afterwards," as we used to say—till the day I made up that story for them out of the Book of Paradise.

The idea of it took our fancy completely, the others as well as mine, and though the story was constantly interrupted, and never came to any real plot or end, there were no Queens, or dwarfs, or characters of any kind in all Bechstein's fairy tales, or even in Grimm, more popular than the Queen of the Blue Robe and her Dwarf, and the Honest Root-gatherer. and John Parkinson, King's Apothecary and Herbarist, and the Weeding Woman of the Earthly Paradise.

When I said, "Wouldn't it be a good new game to have an Earthly Paradise in our gardens, and to have a King's Apothecary and Herbarist to gather things and make medicine of them, and an Honest Root-gatherer to divide the polyanthus plants and the bulbs when we take them up, and divide them fairly, and a Weeding Woman to work and make things tidy, and a Queen in a blue dress, and Saxon for the Dwarf"—the others set up such a shout of approbation that Father sent James to inquire if we imagined that he was going to allow his house to be turned into a bear-garden.

And Arthur said, "No. Tell him we're only turning it into a Speaking Garden, and we're going to turn our own gardens into an Earthly Paradise."

But I said, "Oh, James! please don't say anything of the kind. Say we're very sorry, and we will be quite quiet."

And James said, "Trust me, Miss. It would be a deal more than my place is worth to carry Master Arthur's messages to his Pa."

"I'll be the Honestest Root-gatherer," said Harry. "I'll take up Dandelion roots to the very bottom, and sell them to the King's Apothecary to make Dandelion tea of."

"That's a good idea of yours, Harry," said Arthur. "I shall be John Parkinson—"

"*My* name is Francis le Vean," said Harry.

"King's Apothecary and Herbarist," continued Arthur disdaining the interruption. And I'll bet you my Cloth of Gold Pansy to your Black Prince that Bessy's aunt takes three bottles of my dandelion and chamomile mixture for 'the swimmings,' bathes her eyes every morning with my elder flower lotion to strengthen the sight, and sleeps every night on my herb pillow (if Mary'll make me a flannel bag) before the week's out."

"I could make you a flannel bag," said Adela, "if Mary will make me a bonnet, so that I can be the Weeding Woman. You could make it of tissue paper, with stiff paper inside, like all those caps you made for us last Christmas, Mary, dear, couldn't you? And there is some lovely orange-coloured paper, I know, and pale yellow, and white. The bonnet was Marygold colour, was it not? And one string canary-coloured and one white. I couldn't tie them, of course, being paper; but Bessy's aunt doesn't tie her bonnet. She wears it like a helmet, to shade her eyes. I shall wear mine so too. It will be all Marygold, won't it, dear? Front *and* crown; and the white string going back over one shoulder and the canary string over the other. They might be pinned together behind, perhaps, if they were in my way. Don't you think so?"

I said "Yes," because if one does not say something, Adela never stops saying whatever it is she is saying, even if she has to say it two or three times over.

But I felt so cross and so selfish, that if Mother *could* have known she *would* have despised me!

For the truth was, I had set my heart upon being the Weeding Woman. I thought Adela would want to be the Queen, because of the blue dress, and the plumed hat, and the lace ruffles. Besides, she likes picking flowers, but she never liked grubbing. She would not really like the Weeding Woman's work; it was the bonnet that had caught her fancy, and I found it hard to smother the vexing thought that if I had

gone on dressing the Weeding Woman of the Earthly Paradise like Bessy's aunt, instead of trying to make the story more interesting by inventing a marygold bonnet with yellow and white strings for her, I might have had the part I wished to play in our new game (which certainly was of my devising), and Adela would have been better pleased to be the Queen than to be anything else.

As it was, I knew that if I asked her she would give up the Weeding Woman. Adela is very good, and she is very good-natured. And I knew, too, that it would not have cost her much. She would have given a sigh about the bonnet, and then have turned her whole attention to a blue robe, and how to manage the ruffles.

But even whilst I was thinking about it, Arthur said: "Of course, Mary must be the Queen, unless we could think of something else—very good—for her. If we could have thought of something, Mary, I was thinking how jolly it would be, when Mother comes home, to have had *her* for the Queen, with Chris for her Dwarf, and to give her flowers out of our Earthly Paradise."

"She would look just like a Queen," said Harry.

"In her navy blue nun's cloth and Russian lace," said Adela.

That settled the question. Nothing could be so nice as to have Mother in the game, and the plan provided for Christopher also. I had no wish to be Queen, as far as that went. Dressing up, and walking about the garden would be no fun for me. I really had looked forward to clearing away big baskets full of weeds and rubbish, and keeping our five gardens and the paths between them so tidy as they had never been kept before. And I knew the weeds would have a fine time of it with Adela, as Weeding Woman, in a tissue paper bonnet!

But one thing was more important than tidy gardens—not to be selfish.

I had been left as Little Mother to the others, and I had been lucky enough to think of a game that pleased them. If I turned selfish now, it would spoil everything.

So I said that Arthur's idea was excellent; that I had no wish to be Queen, that I thought I might, perhaps, devise another character for myself by-and-by; and that if the others would leave me alone, I would think about it whilst I was making Adela's bonnet.

The others were quite satisfied. Father says people always are satisfied with things in general, when they've got what they want for themselves, and I think that is true.

I got the tissue paper and the gum; resisted Adela's extreme desire to be with me and talk about the bonnet, and shut myself up in the library.

I got out the *Book of Paradise* too, and propped it up in an arm-chair, and sat on a footstool in front of it, so that I could read in between whiles of making the bonnet. There is an index, so that you can look out the flowers you want to read about. It was no use our looking out flowers, except common ones, such as Harry would be allowed to get bits of out of the big garden to plant in our little gardens, when he became our Honest Root-gatherer.

I looked at the Cowslips again. I am very fond of them, and so they say, are nightingales; which is, perhaps, why that nightingale we know lives in Mary's Meadow, for it is full of cowslips.

The Queen had a great many kinds, and there are pictures of most of them. She had the Common Field Cowslip, the Primrose Cowslip, the Single Green Cowslip, Curled Cowslips, or Galligaskins, Double Cowslips, or Hose-in-Hose, and the Franticke or Foolish Cowslip, or Jackanapes on Horsebacke.

I did not know one of them except the Common Cowslip, but I remembered that Bessy's aunt once told me that she had a double cowslip. It was the day I was planting common ones in my garden, when our gardener despised them. Bessy's aunt despised them too, and she said the double ones were only fit for a cottage garden. I laughed so much that I tore the canary-coloured string as I was gumming it on to the bonnet, to think how I could tell her now that cowslips are Queen's flowers, the common ones as well as the Hose-in-Hose.

Then I looked out the Honeysuckle, it was page 404, and there were no pictures. I began at the beginning of the chapter; this was it and it was as funnily spelt as the preface, but I could read it.

"Chap. cv. *Periclymemum.* Honeysuckles.

"The Honisucle that groweth wilde in euery hedge, although it be very sweete, yet doe I not bring it into my garden, but let it rest in his owne place, to serue their senses that trauell by it, or haue no garden."

I had got so far when James came in. He said—"Letters, miss."

It was the second post, and there was a letter for me, and a book parcel; both from Mother.

Mother's letters are always delightful; and, like things she says, they often seem to come in answer to something you have been thinking about, and which you would never imagine she could know, unless she

was a witch. This was *the knowing bit* in that letter:—"*Your dear father's note this morning did me more good than bottles of tonic. It is due to you, my trustworthy little daughter, to tell you of the bit that pleased me most. He says—'The children seem to me to be behaving unusually well, and I must say, I believe the credit belongs to Mary. She seems to have a genius for keeping them amused, which luckily means keeping them out of mischief.' Now, good Little Mother, I wonder how you yourself are being entertained? I hope the others are not presuming on your unselfishness? Anyhow, I send you a book for your own amusement when they leave you a bit of peace and quiet. I have long been fond of it in French, and I have found an English translation with nice little pictures, and send it to you. I know you will enjoy it, because you are so fond of flowers.*"

Oh, how glad I was that I had let Adela be the Weeding Woman with a good grace. and could open my book parcel with a clear conscience!

I put the old book away and buried myself in the new one.

I never had a nicer. It was called "A Tour Round my Garden," and some of the little stories in it—like the Tulip Rebecca, and the Discomfited Florists—were very amusing indeed; and some were sad and pretty, like the Yellow Roses; and there were delicious bits, like the Enriched Woodman and the Connoisseur Deceived; but there was no "stuff" in it at all.

Some chapters were duller than others, and at last I got into a very dull one, about the vine, and it had a good deal of Greek in it, and we have not begun Greek.

But after the Greek, and the part about Bacchus and Anacreon (I did not care about *them;* they were not in the least like the Discomfited Florists, or the Enriched Woodman!) there came this, and I liked it the best of all:—

"At the extremity of my garden the vine extends in long porticoes, through the arcades of which may be seen trees of all sorts, and foliage of all colours. There is an *azerolier* (a small medlar) which is covered in autumn with little apples, producing the richest effect. I have given away several grafts of this; far from deriving pleasure from the privation of others, I do my utmost to spread and render common and vulgar all the trees and plants that I prefer; it is as if I multiplied the pleasure and the chances of beholding them of all who, like me, really love flowers for their splendour, their grace, and their perfume. Those who,

on the contrary, are jealous of their plants, and only esteem them in proportion with their conviction that no one else possesses them, do not love flowers; and be assured that it is either chance or poverty which has made them collectors of flowers, instead of being collectors of pictures, cameos, medals, or any other thing that might serve as an excuse for indulging in all the joys of possession, seasoned with the idea that others do not possess.

"I have even carried the vulgarisation of beautiful flowers farther than this.

"I ramble about the country near my dwelling, and seek the widest and least frequented spots. In these, after clearing and preparing a few inches of ground, I scatter the seeds of my most favourite plants, which re-sow themselves, perpetuate themselves, and multiply themselves. At this moment, whilst the fields display nothing but the common red poppy, strollers find with surprise in certain wild nooks of our country, the most beautiful double poppies, with their white, red, pink, carnation, and variegated blossoms.

"At the foot of an isolated tree, instead of the little bindweed with its white flower, may sometimes be found the beautifully climbing convolvulus major, of all the lovely colours that can be imagined.

"Sweet peas fasten their tendrils to the bushes, and cover them with the deliciously-scented white, rose-colour, or white and violet butterflies.

"It affords me immense pleasure to fix upon a wild-rose in a hedge, and graft upon it red and white cultivated roses, sometimes single roses of a magnificent golden yellow, then large Provence roses, or others variegated with red and white.

"The rivulets in our neighbourhood do not produce on their banks these forget-me-nots, with their blue flowers, with which the rivulet of my garden is adorned; I mean to save the seed, and scatter it in my walks.

"I have observed two young wild quince trees in the nearest wood; next spring I will engraft upon them two of the best kinds of pears.

"And then, how I enjoy beforehand and in imagination, the pleasure and surprise which the solitary stroller will experience when he meets in his rambles with those beautiful flowers and these delicious fruits!

"This fancy of mine may, one day or another, cause some learned botanist who is herborising in these parts a hundred years hence, to

print a stupid and startling system. All these beautiful flowers will have become common in the country, and will give it an aspect peculiar to itself; and, perhaps, chance or the wind will cast a few of the seeds or some of them amidst the grass which shall cover my forgotten grave!"

This was the end of the chapter, and then there was a vignette, a very pretty one, of a cross-marked, grass-bound grave.

Some books, generally grown-up ones, put things into your head with a sort of rush, and now it suddenly rushed into mine—"*That's what I'll be!* I can think of a name hereafter—but that's what I'll do. I'll take seeds and cuttings, and off-shoots from our garden, and set them in waste-places, and hedges, and fields, and I'll make an Earthly Paradise of Mary's Meadow."

CHAPTER VI.

THE only difficulty about my part was to find a name for it. I might have taken the name of the man who wrote the book—it is Alphonse Karr,—just as Arthur was going to be called John Parkinson. But I am a girl, so it seemed silly to take a man's name. And I wanted some kind of title, too, like King's Apothecary and Herbarist, or Weeding Woman, and Alphonse Karr does not seem to have had any by-name of that sort.

I had put Adela's bonnet on my head to carry it safely, and was still sitting thinking, when the others burst into the library.

Arthur was first, waving a sheet of paper; but when Adela saw the bonnet, she caught hold of his arm and pushed forward.

"Oh, it's sweet! Mary, dear, you're an angel. You couldn't be better if you were a real milliner and lived in Paris. I'm sure you couldn't."

"Mary," said Arthur, "remove that bonnet, which by no means becomes you, and let Adela take it into a corner and gibber over it to herself. I want you to hear this."

"You generally do want the platform," I said, laughing. "Adela, I am very glad you like it. To-morrow, if I can find a bit of pink tissue-paper, I think I could gum on little pleats round the edge of the strings as a finish."

I did not mind how gaudily I dressed the part of Weeding Woman now.

"You are good, Mary. It will make it simply perfect; and, kilts don't you think? Not box pleats?"

Arthur groaned.

"You shall have which you like, dear. Now, Arthur, what is it?"

Arthur shook out his paper, gave it a flap with the back of his hand, as you do with letters when you are acting, and said—"It's to Mother, and when she gets it, she'll be a good deal astonished, I fancy."

When I had heard the letter, I thought so too.

"To the Queen's Most Excellent Maiestie—

"My Dear Mother,—This is to tell you that we have made you Queen of the Blue Robe, and that your son Christopher is a dwarf, and we think you'll both be very much pleased when you hear it. He can do as he likes about having a hump back. When you come home we shall give faire flowers into your Highnesse hands—that is if you'll do what I'm going to ask you, for nobody can grow flowers out of nothing. I want you to write to John—write straight to him, don't put it in your letter to Father—and tell him that you have given us leave to have some of the seedlings out of the frames, and that he's to dig us up a good big clump of daffodils out of the shrubbery—and we'll divide them fairly, for Harry is the Honestest Root-gatherer that ever came over to us. We have turned the whole of our gardens into a *Paradisi in sole Paradisus terrestris*, if you can construe that; but we must have something to make a start. He's got no end of bedding things over—that are doing nothing in the Kitchen Garden and might just as well be in our Earthly Paradise. And please tell him to keep us a tiny pinch of seed at the bottom of every paper when he is sowing the annuals. A little goes a long way, particularly of poppies. And you might give him a hint to let us have a flower-pot or two now and then (I'm sure he takes ours if he finds any of our dead window plants lying about), and that he needn't be so mighty mean about the good earth in the potting shed, or the labels either, they're dirt cheap. Mind you write straight. If only you let John know that the gardens don't entirely belong to him, you'll see that what's spare from the big garden would more than set us going; and it shall further encourage him to accomplish the remainder, who in praying that your Highnesse may enjoy the heavenly Paradise after the many years fruition of this earthly,

"Submitteth to be, Your Maiestie's, in all humble devotion,

"John Parkinson,
"King's Apothecary and Herbarist.

"P.S.—It was Mary's idea."

"My *dear* Arthur!" said I.

"Well, I know it's not very well mixed," said Arthur. "Not half so well as I intended at first. I meant to write it all in the Parkinson style. But then, I thought, if I put the part about John in queer language and old spelling, she mightn't understand what we want. But every word of the end comes out of the Dedication; I copied it the other day, and I think she'll find it a puzzlewig when she comes to it."

After which Arthur folded his paper and put it into an envelope which he licked copiously, and closed the letter with a great deal of display. But then his industry coming to an abrupt end, as it often did, he tossed it to me, saying, "You can address it, Mary; so I enclosed it in my own letter to thank Mother for the book, and I fancy she did write to our gardener, for he gave us a good lot of things, and was much more good-natured than usual.

After Arthur had tossed his letter to me, he clasped his hands over his head and walked up and down thinking. I thought he was calculating what he should be able to get out of John, for when you are planning about a garden, you seem to have to do so much calculating. Suddenly he stopped in front of me and threw down his arms. "Mary," he said, "if Mother were at home, she *would* despise us for selfishness, wouldn't she just?"

"I don't think its selfish to want spare things for our gardens, if she gives us leave," said I.

"I'm not thinking of that," said Arthur; "and you're not selfish, you never are; but she would despise me, and Adela, and Harry, because we've taken your game, and got our parts, and you've made that preposterous bonnet for Adela to be the Weeding Woman in——much she'll weed!——"

"I *shall* weed," said Adela.

"Oh, yes! You'll weed,—Groundsel!—and leave Mary to get up the docks and dandelions, and clear away the heap. But, never mind. Here we've taken Mary's game, and she hasn't even got a part."

"Yes," said I. "I have; I have got a capital part. I have only to think of a name.

"How shall you be dressed?" asked Adela.

"I don't know yet," said I. "I have only just thought of the part."

"Are you sure it's a good-enough one?" asked Harry, with a grave

and remorseful air; "because, if not, you must take Francis le Vean. Girls are called Frances sometimes."

I explained, and I read aloud the bit that had struck my fancy.

Arthur got restless half-way through, and took out the Book of Paradise. His letter was on his mind, But Adela was truly delighted.

"Oh, Mary," she said. "It is lovely. And it just suits you. It suits you much better than being a Queen.

"Much better," said I.

"You'll be exactly the reverse of me," said Harry. "When I'm digging up, you'll be putting in."

"Mary," said Arthur, from the corner where he was sitting with the Book of Paradise in his lap, "what have you put a mark in the place about honeysuckle for?"

"Oh, only because I was just reading there when James brought the letters."

"John Parkinson can't have been quite so nice a man as Alphonse Karr," said Adela; "not so unselfish. He took care of the Queen's Gardens, but he didn't think of making the lanes and hedges nice for poor wayfarers."

I was in the rocking-chair, and I rocked harder to shake up something that was coming into my head. Then I remembered.

"Yes, Adela, he did--a little. He wouldn't root up the honeysuckle out of the hedges (and I suppose he wouldn't let his root gatherers grub it up, either); he didn't put it in the Queen's Gardens, but left it wild outside——"

"To serve their senses that travel by it, or have no garden," interrupted Arthur, reading from the book, "and, oh, Mary! that reminds me—*travel—travellers.* I've got a name for your part just coming into my head. But it dodges out again like a wire worm through a three pronged fork. *Travel—traveller—travellers*—what's the common name for the—oh, dear! the what's his name that scrambles about in the hedges. A flower—you know?"

"Deadly Nightshade?" said Harry.

"Deadly fiddlestick!——"

"Bryony?" I suggested.

"Oh, no; it begins with C."

"Clematis?" said Adela.

"Clematis. Right you are, Adela. And the common name for Clematis is Traveller's Joy. And that's the name for you, Mary,

because you're going to serve their senses that travel by hedges and ditches and perhaps have no garden."

"Traveller's Joy," said Harry. "Hooray!"

"Hooray!" said Adela, and she waved the Weeding Woman's bonnet.

It was a charming name, but it was too good for me, and I said so.

Arthur jumped on the rockers, and rocked me to stop my talking. When I was far back, he took the point of my chin in his two hands and lifted up my cheeks to be kissed, saying in his very kindest way, "It's not a bit too good for you—it's you all over."

Then he jumped off as suddenly as he had jumped on, and as I went back with a bounce he cried, "Oh, Mary! give me back that letter. I must put another postscript and another puzzlewig. P.P.S—Excellent Majesty: Mary will still be our Little Mother on all common occasions, as you wished, but in the Earthly Paradise we call her Traveller's Joy."

CHAPTER VII.

HERE are two or three reasons why the part of Traveller's Joy suited me very well. In the first place it required a good deal of trouble, and I like taking trouble. Then John was willing to let me do many things he would not have allowed the others to do because he could trust me to be careful and to mind what he said.

On each side of the long walk in the kitchen garden there are flowers between you and the vegetables, herbaceous borders, with nice big clumps of things that have suckers, and off-shoots and seedlings at their feet.

"The Long Walk's the place to steal from if I wasn't an *honest* Root-gatherer," said Harry.

John had lovely poppies there that summer. When I read about the poppies Alphonse Karr sowed in the wild nooks of his native country, it made me think of John's French poppies, and pæony poppies, and ranunculus poppies, and carnation poppies, some very large, some quite small, some round and neat, some full and ragged like Japanese chrysanthemums, but all of such beautiful shades of red, rose, crimson, pink, pale blush, and white, that if they had but smelt like carnations instead of smelling like laudanum when you have the toothache, they would have been quite perfect.

In one way they are nicer than carnations. They have such lots of seed, and it is so easy to get. I asked John to let me have some of the heads. He could not possibly want them all, for each head has enough in it to sow two or three yards of a border. He said I might have what seeds I liked, if I used scissors, and did not drag things out of the ground by pulling. But I was not to let the young gentlemen go seed gathering. "Boys be so destructive," John said.

After a time, however, I persuaded him to let Harry transplant seedlings of the things that sow themselves and come up in the autumn, if they came up a certain distance from the parent plants. Harry got a lot of things for our Paradise in this way; indeed he would not have got much otherwise, except wild flowers; and, as he said, "How can I be your Honest Root-gatherer if I mayn't gather anything up by the roots?"

I can't help laughing sometimes to think of the morning when he left off being our Honest Root-gatherer. He did look so funny, and so like Chris.

A day or two before, the Scotch Gardener had brought Saxon to see us, and a new kind of mouldiness that had got into his grape vines to show to John.

He was very cross with Saxon for walking on my garden. (And I am sure I quite forgave him, for I am so fond of him, and he knew no better, poor dear!) But, though he kicked Saxon, the Scotch Gardener was kind to us. He told us that the reason our gardens do not do so well as the big garden, and that my *Jules Margottin* has not such big roses as John's *Jules Margottin* is because we have never renewed the soil.

Arthur and Harry got very much excited about this. They made the Scotch Gardener tell them what good soil ought to be made of, and all the rest of the day they talked of nothing but *compost.* Indeed Arthur would come into my room and talk about compost after I had gone to bed.

Father's farming man was always much more good-natured to us than John ever was. He would give us anything we wanted. Warm milk when the cows were milked, or sweet pea-sticks, or bran to stuff the dolls' pillows. I've known him take his hedging bill, in his dinner hour, and cut fuel for our beacon-fire, when we were playing at a French Invasion. Nothing could be kinder.

Perhaps we do not tease him so much as we tease John. But when I say that Arthur says, "Now, Mary, that's just how you explain away things. The real difference between John and Michael is, that Michael is good-natured and John is not. Catch John showing me the duck's nest by the pond, or letting you into the cow-house to kiss the new calf between the eyes—if he were farm man instead of gardener!"

And the night Arthur sat in my room, talking about compost, he

said, "I shall get some good stuff out of Michael, I know; and Harry and I see our way to road scrapings if we can't get sand; and we mean to take precious good care John doesn't have all the old leaves to himself. It's the top spit that puzzles us, and loam is the most important thing of all."

"What is top spit?" I asked.

"It's the earth you get when you dig up squares of grass out of a field like the paddock. The new earth that's just underneath. I expect John got a lot when he turfed that new piece by the pond, but I don't believe he'd spare us a flower-pot full to save his life."

"Don't quarrel with John, Arthur. It's no good."

"I won't quarrel with him if he behaves himself," said Arthur, "but we mean to have some top-spit somehow."

"If you aggravate him he'll only complain of us to Father."

"I know," said Arthur hotly, "and beastly mean of him, too, when he knows what Father is about this sort of thing."

"I know it's mean. But what's the good of fighting when you'll only get the worst of it?"

"Why to show that you're in the right, and that you know you are," said Arthur. "Good night, Mary. We'll have a compost heap of our own this autumn, mark my words."

Next day, in spite of my remonstrances, Arthur and Harry came to open war with John, and loudly and long did they rehearse their grievances, when we were out of Father's hearing.

"Have we ever swept our own walks, except that once, long ago, when the German women came round with threepenny brooms?" asked Arthur, throwing out his right arm, as if he were making a speech. "And think of all the years John has been getting leaf mould for himself out of our copper beech leaves and now refuses us a barrow load of loam!"

The next morning but one Harry was late for breakfast, and then it seemed that he was not dressing; he had gone out,—very early, one of the servants said. It frightened me, and I went out to look for him.

When I came upon him in our gardens, it was he who was frightened.

"Oh, dear," he exclaimed, "I thought you were John."

I have often seen Harry dirty—very dirty,—but from the mud on his boots to the marks on his face where he had pushed the hair out of

his eyes with earthy fingers, I never saw him quite so grubby before. And if there had been a clean place left in any part of his clothes well away from the ground, that spot must have been soiled by a huge and very dirty sack, under the weight of which his poor little shoulders were bent nearly to his knees.

"What are you doing, Honest Root-gatherer?" I asked; "are you turning yourself into a hump-backed dwarf?"

"I'm not honest, and I'm not a Root-gatherer just now," said Harry, when he had got breath after setting down his load. He spoke shyly and a little surlily, like Chris when he is in mischief.

"Harry, what's that?"

"It's a sack I borrowed from Michael. It won't hurt it, it's had mangel-wurzels in already."

"What have you got in it now? It looks dreadfully heavy."

"It *is* heavy, I can tell you," said Harry, with one more rub of his dirty fingers over his face.

"You look half dead. What is it?"

"It's top spit;" and Harry began to discharge his load on to the walk.

"Oh Harry; where did you get it?"

"Out of the paddock. I've been digging up turfs and getting this out, and putting the turfs back, and stamping them down not to show, ever since six o'clock. It *was* hard work; and I was so afraid of John coming. Mary, you won't tell tales?"

"No, Harry. But I don't think you ought to have taken it without Mother's leave."

"I don't think you can call it stealing," said Harry. "Fields are a kind of wild places anyhow, and the paddock belongs to Father, and it certainly doesn't belong to John."

"No," said I, doubtfully.

"I won't get any more; it's dreadfully hard work," said Harry, but as he shook the sack out and folded it up, he added (in rather a satisfied tone), "I've got a good deal."

I helped him to wash himself for breakfast, and half way through he suddenly smiled and said, "John Parkinson will be glad when he sees *you-know-what*, Mary, whatever the other John thinks of it."

But Harry did not cut any more turfs without leave, for he told me that he had a horrid dream that night of waking up in prison with a warder looking at him through a hole in the door of his cell, and finding

"'I'm not honest, and I'm not a Root-gatherer just now,' said Harry. . . . He spoke shyly and a little surlily, like Chris when he is in mischief."—*Page* 44.

out that he was in penal servitude for stealing top spit from the bottom of the paddock, and Father would not take him out of prison, and that Mother did not know about it.

However, he and Arthur made a lot of compost. They said we couldn't possibly have a Paradise without it.

It made them very impatient. We always want the spring and summer and autumn and winter to get along faster than they do. But this year Arthur and Harry were very impatient with summer.

They were nearly caught one day by Father coming home just as they had got through the gates with Michael's old sack full of road-scrapings, instead of sand (we have not any sand growing near us, and silver sand is rather dear), but we did get leaves together and stacked them to rot into leaf mould.

Leaf mould is splendid stuff, but it takes a long time for the leaves to get mouldy, and it takes a great many too. Arthur is rather impatient, and he used to say—"I never saw leaves stick on to branches in such a way. I mean to get into some of these old trees and give them a good shaking to remind them what time of year it is. If I don't we shan't have anything like enough leaves for our compost."

CHAPTER VIII.

MOTHER was very much surprised by Arthur's letter, but not so much puzzled as he expected. She knew Parkinson's *Paradisus* quite well, and only wrote to me to ask; "What are the boys after with the old books? Does your Father know?"

But when I told her that he had given us leave to be in the library, and that we took great care of the books, and how much we enjoyed the ones about gardening, and all that we were going to do, she was very kind indeed, and promised to put on a blue dress and lace ruffles and be Queen of our Earthly Paradise as soon as she came home.

When she did come home she was much better, and so was Chris. He was delighted to be our Dwarf, but he wanted to have a hump, and he would have such a big one that it would not keep in its place, and kept slipping under his arm and into all sorts of queer positions.

Not one of us enjoyed our new game more than Chris did, and he was always teasing me to tell him the story I had told the others, and to read out the names of the flowers which "the real Queen" had in her "real paradise." He made Mother promise to try to get him a bulb of the real Dwarf Daffodil as his next birthday present, to put in his own garden.

"And I'll give you some compost," said Arthur. "It'll be ever so much better than a stupid book with 'stuff' in it"

Chris did seem much stronger. He had colour in his cheeks, and his head did not look so large. But he seemed to puzzle over things in it as much as ever, and he was just as odd and quaint.

One warm day I had taken the "Tour round my Garden" and was sitting near the bush in the little wood behind our house, when Chris came after me with a Japanese fan in his hand, and sat down cross-legged at my feet. As I was reading, and Mother has taught us not to interrupt people when they are reading, he said nothing, but there he sat.

"What is it, Chris?" said I.

"I am discontented," said Chris.

"I'm very sorry," said I.

"I don't think I'm selfish, particularly, but I'm discontented."

"What about?"

"Oh, Mary, I do wish I had not been away when you invented Paradise, then I should have had a name in the game."

"You've got a name, Chris. You're the Dwarf."

"Ah, but what was the Dwarf's name?"

"I don't know," I admitted.

"No; that's just it. I've only one name, and Arthur and Harry have two. Arthur is a Pothecary" (Chris could never be induced to accept Apothecary as one word), "and he's John Parkinson as well. Harry is Honest Root-gather, and he is Francis le Vean. If I'd not been away I should have had two names."

"You can easily have two names," said I. "We'll call the Dwarf Thomas Brown."

Chris shook his big head.

"No, no. That wasn't his name; I know it wasn't. It's only stuff. I want another name out of the old book."

I dared not tell him that the dwarf was not in the old book. I said:

"My dear Chris, you really are discontented; we can't all have double names. Adela has only one name, she is Weeding Woman and nothing else; and I have only one name, I'm Traveller's Joy, and that's all."

"But you and Adela are girls," said Chris, complacently. "The boys have two names."

I suppressed some resentment, for Christopher's eyes were beginning to look weary, and said:

"Shall I read to you for a bit?"

"One warm day I had taken the 'Tour round my Garden,' and was sitting near the bush in the little wood behind our house, when Chris came after me with a Japanese fan in his hand, and sat down cross-legged at my feet."—*Page* 48.

"No, don't read. Tell me things out of the old book. Tell me about the Queen's flowers. Don't tell me about daffodils, they make me think what a long way off my birthday is, and I'm quite discontented enough."

And Chris sighed, and lay down on the grass, with one arm under his head, and his fan in his hand; and, as well as I could remember, I told him all about the different varieties of Cowslips, down to the Franticke, or Foolish Cowslip, and he became quite happy.

Dear Father is rather short sighted, but he can hold a round glass in his eye without cutting himself. It was the other eye which was next to Chris at prayers the following morning; but he saw his legs, and the servants had hardly got out of the hall before he shouted "Pull up your stockings, Chris!"—and then to Mother, "Why do you keep that sloven of a girl Bessy, if she can't dress the children decently? But I can't conceive what made you put that child into knickerbockers, he can't keep his stockings up."

"Yes I can," said Christopher, calmly, looking at his legs.

"Then what have you got 'em down for?" shouted Father.

"They're not all down," said Chris, his head still bent over his knees, till I began to fear he would have a fit.

"One of 'em is, anyhow. I saw it at prayers. Pull it up."

"Two of them are," said Christopher, never lifting his admiring gaze from his stockings. "Two of them are down, and two of them are up, quite up, quite tidy."

Dear Father rubbed his glass and put it back into his eye.

"Why, how many stockings have you got on?"

"Four," said Chris, smiling serenely at his legs; "and it isn't Bessy's fault. I put 'em all on myself, everyone of them."

At this minute James brought in the papers, and Father only laughed, and said, "I never saw such a chap," and began to read. He is very fond of Christopher, and Chris is never afraid of him.

I was going out of the room, and Chris followed me into the hall, and drew my attention to his legs, which were clothed in four stockings; one pair, as he said, being drawn tidily up over his knees, the other pair turned down with some neatness in folds a little above his ankles.

"Mary," he said, "I'm contented now."

"I'm very glad, Chris. But do leave off staring at your legs. All the blood will run into your head."

"I wish things wouldn't always get into *my* head, and nobody else's," said Chris, peevishly, as he raised it; but when he looked back at his stockings, they seemed to comfort him again.

"Mary, I've found another name for myself."

"Dear Chris! I'm so glad."

"It's a real one, out of the old book. I thought of it entirely by myself."

"Good Dwarf. What is your name?"

"*Hose-in-Hose*," said Christopher, still smiling down upon his legs.

CHAPTER IX.

ALAS for the hose-in-hose!

I laughed over Christopher and his double stockings, and I danced for joy when Bessy's Aunt told me that she had got me a fine lot of roots of double cowslips. I never guessed what misery I was about to suffer, because of the hose-in-hose.

I had almost forgotten that Bessy's Aunt knew double cowslips. After I became Traveller's Joy I was so busy with wayside planting that I had thought less of my own garden than usual, and had allowed Arthur to do what he liked with it as part of the Earthly Paradise (and he was always changing his plans), but Bessy's Aunt had not forgotten about it, which was very good of her.

The Squire's Weeding Woman is old enough to be Bessy's Aunt, but she has an aunt of her own, who lives seven miles on the other side of the Moor, and the Weeding Woman does not get to see her very often. It is a very out-of-the-way village, and she has to wait for chances of a cart and team coming and going from one of the farms, and so get a lift.

It was the Weeding Woman's Aunt who sent me the hose-in-hose.

The Weeding Woman told me—"Aunt be mortal fond of her flowers, but she've no notions of gardening, not in the ways of a gentleman's garden. But she be after 'em all along, so well as the roomatiz in her back do let her, with an old shovel and a bit of stuff to keep the frost out, one time, and the old shovel and a bit of stuff to

keep 'em moistened from the drought, another time; cuddling of 'em like Christians. Ee zee, Miss, Aunt be advanced in years; her family be off her mind, zum married, zum buried; and it zim as if her flowers be like new childern for her, spoilt childern, too, as I zay, and most fuss about they that be least worth it, zickly uns and contrairy uns, as parents will. Many's time I do say to she—'Th' old Zquire's garden, now, 'twould zim strange to thee, sartinly 'twould! How would 'ee feel to see Gardener zowing's spring plants by the hunderd, and a-throwing of 'em away by the score when beds be vull, and turning of un out for bedding plants, and throwing they away when he'eve made his cuttings?' And she 'low she couldn't abear it, no more'n see Herod a mass-sakering of the Innocents. But if 'ee come to Bible, I do say Aunt put me in mind of the par'ble of the talents, she do, for what you give her she make ten of, while other folks be losing what they got. And 'tis well too, for if 'twas not for givin' of un away, seeing's she lose nothin', and can't abear to destry nothin', and never takes un up but to set un again, six in place of one, as I say, with such a mossel of a garden, 'Aunt, where would you be?' And she 'low she can't tell, but the Lard would provide. 'Thank He,' I says, 'you be so out o' way, and 'ee back so bad, and past travelling, zo there be no chance of 'ee ever seein' Old Zquire's Gardener's houses and they stove plants;' for if Gardener give un a pot, sure's death her'd set it in the chimbly nook on frosty nights, and put bed-quilt over un, and any cold corner would do for she."

At this point the Weeding Woman became short of breath, and I managed to protest against taking so many plants of the hose-in-hose.

"Take un and welcome, my dear, take un and welcome," replied Bessy's Aunt. "I did say to Aunt to keep two or dree, but 'One be aal I want,' her says, 'I'll have so many agin in a few years, dividin' of un in autumn,' her says. 'Thee've one foot in grave Aunt,' says I, 'it don't altogether become 'ee to forecast autumns,' I says, 'when next may be your latter end, 's like as not.' 'Niece,' her says, 'I be no ways presuming. His will be done,' her says. 'but if I'm spared I'll rear un, and if I'm took, 'twill be where I sha'n't want un. Zo let young lady have un,' her says. And there a be!"

When I first saw the nice little plants, I did think of my own garden, but not for long. My next and final thought was—"Mary's Meadow!"

Since I became Traveller's Joy, I had chiefly been busy in the

hedge-rows by the high-roads, and in waste places, like the old quarry, and very bare and trampled bits, where there seemed to be no flowers at all.

You cannot say that of Mary's Meadow. Not to be a garden, it is one of the most flowery places I know. I did once begin a list of all that grows in it, but it was in one of Arthur's old exercise books, which he had "thrown in," in a bargain we had, and there were very few blank pages left. I had thought a couple of pages would be more than enough, so I began with rather full accounts of the flowers, but I used up the book long before I had written out one-half of what blossoms in Mary's Meadow.

Wild roses, and white bramble, and hawthorn, and dogwood, with its curious red flowers; and nuts, and maple, and privet, and all sorts of bushes in the hedge, far more than one would think; and ferns, and the stinking iris, which has such splendid berries, in the ditch—the ditch on the lower side where it is damp, and where I meant to sow forget-me-nots, like Alphonse Karr, for there are none there as it happens. On the other side, at the top of the field, it is dry, and blue succory grows, and grows out on the road beyond. The most beautiful blue possible, but so hard to pick. And there are Lent lilies, and lords and ladies, and ground ivy, which smells herby when you find it, trailing about and turning the colour of Mother's "aurora" wool in green winters; and sweet white violets, and blue dog violets, and primroses, of course, and two or three kinds of orchis, and all over the field cowslips, cowslips, cowslips—to please the nightingale.

And I wondered if the nightingale would find out the hose-in-hose, when I had planted six of them in the sunniest, cosiest corner of Mary's Meadow.

For this was what I resolved to do, though I kept my resolve to myself, for which I was afterwards very glad. I did not tell the others because I thought that Arthur might want some of the plants for our Earthly Paradise, and I wanted to put them all in Mary's Meadow. I said to myself, like Bessy's great-aunt, that "if I was spared" I would go next year and divide the roots of the six, and bring some off-sets to our gardens, but I would keep none back now. The nightingale should have them all.

We had been busy in our gardens, and in the roads and bye-lanes, and I had not been in Mary's Meadow for a long time before the afternoon when I put my little trowel, and a bottle of water, and the six

hose-in-hose into a basket, and was glad to get off quietly and alone to plant them. The highways and hedges were very dusty, but there it was very green. The nightingale had long been silent, I do not know where he was, but the rooks were not at all silent; they had been holding a parliament at the upper end of the field this morning, and were now all talking at once, and flapping about the tops of the big elms which were turning bright yellow, whilst down below a flight of starlings had taken their place, and sat in the prettiest circles; and groups of hedge-sparrows flew and mimicked them. And in the fields round about the sheep baaed, and the air, which was very sweet, was so quiet that these country noises were the only sounds to be heard, and they could be heard from very far away.

I had found the exact spot I wanted, and had planted four of the hose-in-hose, and watered them from the bottle, and had the fifth in my hand, and the sixth still in the basket, when all these nice noises were drowned by a loud harsh shout which made me start, and sent the flight of starlings into the next field, and made the hedge-sparrows jump into the hedge.

And when I looked up I saw the Old Squire coming towards me, and storming and shaking his fist at me as he came. But with the other hand he held Saxon by the collar, who was struggling to get away from him and to go to me.

I had so entirely forgotten about Father's quarrel with the Squire, that when the sight of the old gentleman in a rage suddenly reminded me, I was greatly stupefied and confused, and really did not at first hear what he said. But when I understood that he was accusing me of digging cowslips out of his field, I said at once (and pretty loud, for he was deaf) that I was not digging up anything, but was planting double cowslips to grow up and spread amongst the common ones.

I suppose it did sound rather unlikely, as the Old Squire knew nothing about our game, but a thing being unlikely is no reason for calling truthful people liars, and that was what the Old Squire called me

It choked me, and when he said I was shameless, and that he had caught me with the plants upon me, and yelled to me to empty my basket, I threw away the fifth and sixth hose-in-hose as if they had been adders, but I could not speak again. He must have been beside himself with rage, for he called me all sort of names, and said I was my father's own child, a liar and a thief. Whilst he was talking about sending me

"I saw the Old Squire coming towards me, and storming and shaking his fist at me as he came. But with the other hand he held Saxon by the collar, who was struggling to get away from him and to go to me."—*Page* 55.

to prison (and I thought of Harry's dream, and turned cold with fear), Saxon was tugging to get to me, and at last he got away and came rushing up.

Now I knew that the Old Squire was holding Saxon back because he thought Saxon wanted to worry me as a trespasser, but I don't know whether he let Saxon go at last, because he thought I deserved to be worried, or whether Saxon got away of himself. When his paws were almost on me the Old Squire left off abusing me, and yelled to the dog, who at last, very unwillingly, went back to him, but when he just got to the Squire's feet he stopped, and pawed the ground in the funny way he sometimes does, and looked up at his master as much as to say, "You see it's only play," and then turned round and raced back to me as hard as he could lay legs to ground. This time he reached me, and jumped to lick my face, and I threw my arms round his neck and burst into tears.

When you are crying and kissing at the same time, you cannot hear anything else, so what more the Old Squire said I do not know.

I picked up my basket and trowel at once, and fled homewards as fast as I could go, which was not very fast, so breathless was I with tears and shame and fright.

When I was safe in our grounds I paused and looked back. The Old Squire was still there, shouting and gesticulating, and Saxon was at his heels, and over the hedge two cows were looking at him; but the rooks and the starlings were far off in distant trees and fields.

And I sobbed afresh when I remembered that I had been called a liar and a thief, and had lost every one of my hose-in-hose; and this was all that had come of trying to make an Earthly Paradise of Mary's Meadow, and of taking upon myself the name of Traveller's Joy.

CHAPTER X.

I TOLD no one. It was bad enough to think of by myself. I could not have talked about it. But every day I expected that the Old Squire would send a letter or a policeman, or come himself, and rage and storm, and tell Father.

He never did; and no one seemed to suspect that anything had gone wrong, except that Mother fidgetted because I looked ill, and would show me to Dr. Solomon. It is a good thing doctors tell you what they think is the matter, and don't ask you what you think, for I could not have told him about the Squire. He said I was below par, and that it was our abominable English climate, and he sent me a bottle of tonic. And when I had taken half the bottle, and had begun to leave off watching for the policeman, I looked quite well again. So I took the rest, not to waste it, and thought myself very lucky. My only fear now was that Bessy's aunt might ask after the hose-in-hose. But she never did.

I had one more fright, where I least expected it. It had never occurred to me that Lady Catherine would take an interest in our game, and want to know what we had done, and what we were doing, and what we were going to do, or I should have been far more afraid of her than of Bessy's aunt. For the Weeding Woman has a good deal of delicacy, and often begs pardon for taking liberties; but if Aunt Catherine takes an interest, and wants to know, she asks one question after another, and does not think whether you like to answer or not.

She took an interest in our game after one of Christopher's luncheons with her.

She often asks Chris to go there to luncheon, all by himself

Father is not very fond of his going, chiefly, I fancy, because he is so fond of Chris, and misses him. Sometimes, in the middle of luncheon, he looks at Christopher's empty place, and says, "I wonder what those two are talking about over their pudding. They are the queerest pair of friends." If we ask Chris what they have talked about, he wags his head, and looks very well pleased with himself, and says, "Lots of things. I tell her things, and she tells me things." And that is all we can get out of him.

A few weeks afterwards, after I lost the hose-in-hose, Chris went to have luncheon with Aunt Catherine, and he came back rather later than usual.

"You must have been telling each other a good deal to-day, Chris," I said.

"I told her lots," said Chris, complacently. "She didn't tell me nothing, hardly. But I told her lots. My apple fritter got cold whilst I was telling it. She sent it away, and had two hot ones, new, on purpose for me."

"What *did* you tell her?"

"I told her your story; she liked it very much. And I told her Daffodils, and about my birthday; and I told her Cowslips—all of them. Oh, I told her lots. She didn't tell me nothing."

A few days later, Aunt Catherine asked us to tea—all of us—me, Arthur, Adela, Harry, and Chris. And she asked us all about our game, When Harry said, "I dig up, but Mary plants—not in our garden, but in wild places, and woods, and hedges, and fields," Lady Catherine blew her nose very loud, and said, "I should think you don't do much digging and planting in that field your Father went to law about?" and my teeth chattered so with fright that I think Lady Catherine would have heard them if she hadn't been blowing her nose. But, luckily for me, Arthur said, "Oh, we never go near Mary's Meadow now, we're so busy." And then Aunt Catherine asked what made us think of my name, and I repeated most of the bit from Alphonse Karr, for I knew it by heart now; and Arthur repeated what John Parkinson says about the "Honisuckle that groweth wild in every hedge," and how he left it there, "to serve their senses that travel by it, or have no garden;" and then he said, "So Mary is called Traveller's Joy, because she plants flowers in the hedges, to serve their senses that travel by them."

"And who serves them that have no garden?" asked Aunt Catherine, sticking her gold glasses over her nose, and looking at us.

"None of us do," said Arthur, after thinking for a minute.

"Humph!" said Aunt Catherine.

Next time Chris was asked to luncheon, I was asked too. Father laughed at me, and teased me, but I went.

I was very much amused by the airs which Chris gave himself at table. He was perfectly well behaved, but, in his quiet old-fashioned way, he certainly gave himself airs. We have only one man indoors—James; but Aunt Catherine has three—a butler, a footman, and a second footman. The second footman kept near Christopher, who sat opposite Aunt Catherine, (she made me sit on one side), and seemed to watch to attend upon him; but if Christopher did want anything, he always ignored this man, and asked the butler for it, and called him by his name.

After a bit, Aunt Catherine began to talk about the game again.

"Have you got anyone to serve them that have no garden, yet?" she asked.

Christopher shook his head, and said "No."

"Humph," said Aunt Catherine; "better take me into the game."

"Could you be of any use?" asked Christopher. "Toast and water, Chambers."

The butler nodded, as majestically as Chris himself, to the second footman, who flew to replenish the silver mug, which had been Lady Catherine's when she was a little girl. When Christopher had drained it (he is a very thirsty boy), he repeated the question.

"Do you think you could be of any use?"

Mr. Chambers, the butler, never seems to hear anything that people say, except when they ask for something to eat or drink; and he does not often hear that, because he watches to see what you want, and gives it of himself, or sends it by the footman. He looks just as if he was having his photograph taken, staring at a point on the wall and thinking of nothing; but when Christopher repeated his question I saw Chambers frown. I believe he thinks Christopher presumes on Lady Catherine's kindness, and does not approve of it.

It is quite the other way with Aunt Catherine. Just when you would think she must turn angry, and scold Chris for being rude, she only begins to laugh, and shakes like a jelly (she is very stout) and encourages him. She said,

"Take care all that toast and water doesn't get into your head, Chris."

She said that to vex him, because, ever since he heard that he had water on the brain, Chris is very easily affronted about his head. He was affronted now, and began to eat his bread-and-butter pudding in silence, Lady Catherine still shaking and laughing. Then she wiped her eyes, and said,

"Never mind, old man, I'm going to tell you something. Put the sugar and cream on the table, Chambers, and you needn't wait."

The men went out very quietly, and Aunt Catherine went on:

"Where do you think I was yesterday? In the new barracks—a place I set my face against ever since they began to build it, and spoil one of my best peeps from the Rhododendron Walk. I went to see a young cousin of mine, who was fool enough to marry a poor officer, and have a lot of little boys and girls, no handsomer than you, Chris."

"Are they as handsome?" said Chris, who had recovered himself, and was selecting currants from his pudding, and laying them aside for a final *bonne bouche.*

"Humph! Perhaps not. But they eat so much pudding, and wear out so many boots, that they are all too poor to live anywhere except in barracks."

Christopher laid down his spoon, and looked as he always looks when he is hearing a sad story.

"Is barracks like the workhouse, Aunt Catherine?" he asked.

"A good deal like the workhouse," said Aunt Catherine. Then she went on—"I told her Mother I could not begin calling at the barracks. There are some very low streets close by, and my coachman said he couldn't answer for his horses with bugles, and perhaps guns, going off when you least expect them. I told her I would ask them to dinner; and I did, but they were engaged. Well, yesterday I changed my mind, and I told Harness that I meant to go to the barracks, and the horses would have to take me. So we started. When we were going along the upper road, between the high hedges, what do you think I saw?"

Chris had been going on with his pudding again, but he paused to make a guess.

"A large cannon, just going off?"

"No. If I'd seen that, you wouldn't have seen any more of me. I saw masses of wild clematis scrambling everywhere, so that the hedge looked as if somebody had been dressing it up in tufts of feathers."

As she said this, Lady Catherine held out her hand to me across

the table very kindly. She has a fat hand, covered with rings, and I put my hand into it.

"And what do you think came into my head?" she asked.

"Toast and water," said Chris, maliciously.

"No, you monkey. I began to think of hedge-flowers, and travellers, and Traveller's Joy."

Aunt Catherine shook my hand here, and dropped it.

"And you thought how nice it was for the poor travellers to have such nice flowers," said Chris, smiling, and wagging his head up and down.

"Nothing of the kind," said Aunt Catherine, brusquely. "I thought what lots of flowers the travellers had already, without Mary planting any more; and I thought not one traveller in a dozen paid much attention to them—begging John Parkinson's pardon—and how much more in want of flowers people "that have no garden" are; and then I thought of that poor girl in those bare barracks, whose old home was one of the prettiest places, with the loveliest garden, in all Berkshire."

"Was it an Earthly Paradise?" asked Chris.

"It was, indeed. Well, when I thought of her inside those brick walls, looking out on one of those yards they march about in, now they've cut down all the trees, and planted sentry boxes, I put my best bonnet out of the window, which always spoils the feather, and told Harness to turn his horses' heads, and drive home again."

"What for?" said Chris, as brusquely as Lady Catherine.

"I sent for Hobbs."

"Hobbs the Gardener?" said Chris.

"Hobbs the Gardener; and I told Chambers to give him the basket from the second peg, and then I sent him into the conservatory to fill it. Mary, my dear, I am very particular about my baskets. If ever I lend you my diamonds, and you lose them, I may forgive you—I shall know *that* was an accident; but if I lend you a basket, and you don't return it, don't look me in the face again. I always write my name on them, so there's no excuse. And I don't know a greater piece of impudence—and people are wonderfully impudent now-a-days—than to think that because a thing only cost fourpence. you need not be at the trouble of keeping it clean and dry, and of sending it back."

"Some more toast and water please," said Chris.

Aunt Catherine helped him, and continued—"Hobbs is a carefu

man—he has been with me ten years—he doesn't cut flowers recklessly as a rule, but when I saw that basket I said, 'Hobbs, you've been very extravagant.' He looked ashamed of himself, but he said, 'I understood they was for Miss Kitty, m'm. She's been used to nice gardens, m'm.' Hobbs lived with them in Berkshire before he came to me."

"It was very nice of Hobbs," said Chris, emphatically.

"Humph!" said Aunt Catherine, "the flowers were mine."

"Did you ever get to the barracks?" asked Chris, "and what was they like when you did?"

"They were about as unlike Kitty's old home as anything could well be. She has made her rooms pretty enough, but it was easy to see she is hard up for flowers. She's got an old rose-coloured Sevres bowl that was my Grandmother's, and there it was, filled with bramble leaves and Traveller's Joy (which *she* calls Old Man's Beard; Kitty always would differ from her elders!) and a soup-plate full of forget-me-nots. She said two of the children had half-drowned themselves, and lost a good straw hat in getting them for her. Just like their mother, as I told her."

"What did she say when you brought out the basket?" asked Chris, disposing of his reserve of currants at one mouthful, and laying down his spoon.

"She said, 'Oh! oh! oh!' till I told her to say something more amusing, and then she said, 'I could cry for joy!' and, 'Tell Hobbs he remembers all my favourites."

Christopher here bent his head over his empty plate, and said grace (Chris is very particular about his grace), and then got down from his chair and went up to Lady Catherine, and threw his arms round her as far as they would go, saying, "You are good. And I love you. I should think she thinked you was a fairy godmother."

After they had hugged each other, Aunt Catherine said, "Will you take me into the game, if I serve them that have no garden?"

Chris and I said "Yes" with one voice.

"Then come into the drawing-room," said Aunt Catherine, getting up and giving a hand to each of us. "And Chris shall give me a name."

Chris pondered a long time on this subject, and seemed a good deal disturbed in his mind. Presently he said, "I *won't* be selfish. You shall have it."

"Shall have what, you oddity?"

"I'm not a oddity, and I'm going to give you the name I invented for myself. But you'll have to wear four stockings, two up and two down."

"Then you may keep *that* name to yourself," said Aunt Catherine.

Christopher looked relieved.

"Perhaps you'd not like to be called Old Man's Beard?"

"Certainly not!" said Aunt Catherine.

"It *is* more of a boy's name," said Chris. "You might be the Franticke or Foolish Cowslip, but it is Jack an Apes on Horseback too, and that's a boy's name. You shall be a Daffodil, not a dwarf daffodil, but a big one, because you are big. Wait a minute—I know which you shall be. You shall be Nonsuch. It's a very big one, and it means none like it. So you shall be Nonsuch, for there's no one like you."

On which Christopher and Lady Catherine hugged each other afresh.

* * * * * *

"Who told most to-day?" asked Father when we got home.

"Oh, Aunt Catherine. Much most," said Christopher.

CHAPTER XI.

THE height of our game was in Autumn. It is such a good time for digging up, and planting, and dividing, and making cuttings, and gathering seeds, and sowing them too. But it went by very quickly, and when the leaves began to fall they fell very quickly, and Arthur never had to go up the trees and shake them.

After the first hard frost we quite gave up playing at the Earthly Paradise; first, because there was nothing we could do, and, secondly, because a lot of snow fell, and Arthur had a grand idea of making snow statues all along the terrace, so that Mother could see them from the drawing-room windows. We worked very hard, and it was very difficult to manage legs without breaking; so we made most of them Romans in togas, and they looked very well from a distance, and lasted a long time, because the frost lasted.

And, by degrees, I almost forgot that terrible afternoon in Mary's Meadow. Only when Saxon came to see us I told him that I was very glad that no one understood his bark, so that he could not let out what had become of the hose-in-hose.

But when the winter was past, and the snowdrops came out in the shrubbery, and there were catkins on the nut trees, and the missel-thrush we had been feeding in the frost sat out on mild days and sang to us, we all of us began to think of our gardens again, and to go poking about "with our noses in the borders," as Arthur said, "as if we were dogs snuffing after truffles" What we really were "snuffing after"

were the plants we had planted in autumn, and which were poking and sprouting, and coming up in all directions.

Arthur and Harry did real gardening in the Easter holidays, and they captured Adela now and then, and made her weed. But Christopher's delight was to go with me to the waste places and hedges, where I had planted things as Traveller's Joy, and to get me to show them to him where they had begun to make a spring start, and to help him to make up rambling stories, which he called "Supposings," of what the flowers would be like, and what this or that traveller would say when he saw them. One of his favourite *supposings* was—"Supposing a very poor man was coming along the road, with his dinner in a handkerchief; and supposing he sat down under the hedge to eat it; and supposing it was cold beef, and he had no mustard; and supposing there was a seed on your nasturtium plants, and he knew it wouldn't poison him; and supposing he ate it with his beef, and it tasted nice and hot, like a pickle, wouldn't he wonder how it got there?"

But when the primroses had been out a long time, and the cowslips were coming into bloom, to my horror Christopher began "supposing" that we should find hose-in-hose in some of the fields, and all my efforts to put this idea out of his head, and to divert him from the search, were utterly in vain.

Whether it had anything to do with his having had water on the brain I do not know, but when once an idea got into Christopher's head there was no dislodging it. He now talked of hose-in-hose constantly. One day he announced that he was "discontented" once more, and should remain so till he had "found a hose-in-hose." I enticed him to a field where I knew it was possible to secure an occasional oxlip, but he only looked pale, shook his head distressingly, and said, "I don't think nothin' of Oxlips." Coloured primroses would not comfort him. He professed to disbelieve in the time-honoured prescription, "Plant a primrose upside down, and it will come up a polyanthus," and refused to help me to make the experiment. At last the worst came. He suddenly spoke, with smiles—"I *know* where we'll find hose-in-hose! In Mary's Meadow. It's the fullest field of cowslips there is. Hurrah! Supposing we find hose-in-hose, and supposing we find green cowslips, and supposing we fine curled cowslips or galligaskins, and supposing——"

But I could not bear it. I fairly ran away from him, and shut myself up in my room and cried. I knew it was silly, and yet I could

not bear the thought of having to satisfy everybody's curiosity, and describe that scene in Mary's Meadow, which had wounded me so bitterly, and explain why I had not told of it before.

I cried, too, for another reason. Mary's Meadow had been dear to us all, ever since I could remember. It was always our favourite field. We had coaxed our nurses there, when we could induce them to leave the high road, or when, luckily for us, on account of an epidemic, or for some reason or another, they were forbidden to go gossiping into the town. We had "pretended" fairies in the nooks of the delightfully neglected hedges, and we had found fairy-rings to prove our pretendings true. We went there for flowers; we went there for mushrooms and puff-balls; we went there to hear the nightingale. What cowslip balls, and what cowslip tea-parties it had afforded us. It is fair to the Old Squire to say that we were sad trespassers, before he and Father quarrelled and went to law. For Mary's Meadow was a field with every quality to recommend it to childish affections.

And now I was banished from it, not only by the quarrel, of which we had really not heard much, or realised it as fully, but by my own bitter memories. I cried afresh to think I should never go again to the corner where I always found the earliest violets; and then I cried to think that the nightingale would soon be back, and how that very morning, when I opened my window, I had heard the cuckoo, and could tell that he was calling from just about Mary's Meadow.

I cried my eyes into such a state, that I was obliged to turn my attention to making them fit to be seen; and I had spent quite half an hour in bathing them and breathing on my handkerchief, and dabbing them, which is more soothing, when I heard Mother calling me. I winked hard, drew a few long breaths, rubbed my cheeks, which were so white they showed up my red eyes, and ran down-stairs. Mother was coming to meet me. She said—"Where is Christopher?"

It startled me. I said, "He was with me in the garden, about—oh, about an hour ago; have you lost him? I'll go and look for him."

And I snatched up a garden hat, which shaded my swollen eyelids, and ran out. I could not find him anywhere, and becoming frightened, I ran down the drive, calling him as I went, and through the gate, and out into the road.

A few yards farther on I met him.

That child is most extraordinary. One minute he looks like a ghost; an hour later his face is beaming with a radiance that seems

absolutely to fatten him under your eyes. That was how he looked just then as he came towards me, smiling in an effulgent sort of way, as if he were the noonday sun—no less, and carrying a small nosegay in his hand.

When he came within hearing he boasted, as if he had been Cæsar himself.

"I went; I found it. I've got them."

And as he held his hand up, and waved the nosegay—I knew all. He had been to Mary's Meadow, and the flowers between his fingers were hose-in-hose.

CHAPTER XII.

"I WON'T be selfish, Mary," Christopher said. "You invented the game, and you told me about them You shall have them in water on your dressing-table ; they might get lost in the nursery. Bessy is always throwing things out. To-morrow I shall go and look for galligaskins."

I was too glad to keep them from Bessy's observation, as well as her unparalleled powers of destruction, which I knew well. I put them into a slim glass on my table, and looked stupidly at them, and then out of the window at Mary's Meadow.

So they had lived—and grown—and settled there—and were now in bloom. *My* plants.

Next morning I was sitting, drawing, in the schoolroom window, when I saw the Old Squire coming up the drive. There is no mistaking him when you can see him at all. He is a big, handsome old man. with white whiskers, and a white hat, and white gaiters, and he generally wears a light coat, and a flower in his button-hole. The flower he wore this morning looked like——, but I was angry with myself for thinking of it, and went on drawing again, as well as I could, for I could not help wondering why he was coming to our house. Then it struck me he might have seen Chris trespassing, and he might be coming at last to lay a formal complaint.

Twenty minutes later James came to tell me that Father wished to see me in the library, and when I got there, Father was just settling his

eye-glass in his eye, and the Old Squire was standing on the hearthrug, with a big piece of paper in his hand. And then I saw that I was right, and that the flowers in his button-hole were hose-in-hose.

As I came in he laid down the paper, took the hose-in-hose out of his button-hole in his left hand, and held out his right hand to me, saying: "I'm more accustomed to public speaking than to private speaking, Miss Mary. But—— will you be friends with me?"

In Mary's Meadow my head had got all confused, because I was frightened. I was not frightened to-day, and I saw the whole matter in a moment. He had found the double cowslips, and he knew now that I was neither a liar nor a thief. I was glad, but I could not feel very friendly to him. I said, "You can speak when you are angry."

Though he was behind me, I could feel Father coming nearer, and I knew somehow that he had taken out his glass again to rub it and put it back, as he does when he is rather surprised or amused. I was afraid he meant to laugh at me afterwards, and he can tease terribly, but I could not have helped saying what came into my head that morning if I had tried. When you have suffered a great deal about anything, you cannot sham, not even politeness.

The Old Squire got rather red. Then he said, "I am afraid I am very hasty, my dear, and say very unjustifiable things. But I am very sorry, and I beg your pardon. Will you forgive me?"

I said, "Of course, if you're sorry, I forgive you, but you have been a very long time in repenting."

Which was true. If I had been cross with one of the others, and had borne malice for five months, I should have thought myself very wicked. But when I had said it, I felt sorry, for the old gentleman made no answer. Father did not speak either, and I began to feel very miserable. I touched the flowers, and the Old Squire gave them to me in silence. I thanked him very much, and then I said—

"I am very glad you know about it now. . . . I'm very glad they lived. . . . I hope you like them? . . . I hope, if you do like them, that they'll grow and spread all over your field."

The Old Squire spoke at last. He said, "It is not my field any longer."

I said, "Oh, why?"

"I have given it away; I have been a long time in repenting, but when I did repent I punished myself. I have given it away."

It overwhelmed me, and when he took up the big paper again, I thought he was going, and I tried to stop him, for I was sorry I had spoken unkindly to him, and I wanted to be friends.

"Please don't go," I said. "Please stop and be friends. And oh, please, please don't give Mary's Meadow away. You mustn't punish yourself. There's nothing to punish yourself for. I forgive you with all my heart, and I'm sorry I spoke crossly. I have been so very miserable, and I was so vexed at wasting the hose-in-hose, because Bessy's great aunt gave them to me, and I've none left. Oh, the unkindest thing you could do to me now would be to give away Mary's Meadow."

The Old Squire had taken both my hands in his, and now he asked very kindly—"Why, my dear, why don't you want me to give away Mary's Meadow?"

"Because we are so fond of it. And because I was beginning to hope that now we're friends, and you know we don't want to steal your things, or to hurt your field, perhaps you would let us play in it sometimes, and perhaps have Saxon to play with us there. We are so very fond of him too."

"You are fond of Mary's Meadow?" said the Old Squire.

"Yes, yes! We have been fond of it all our lives. We don't think there is any field like it, and I don't believe there can be. Don't give it away. You'll never get one with such flowers in it again. And now there are hose-in-hose, and they are not at all common. Bessy's aunts' aunt has only got one left, and she's taking care of it with a shovel. And if you'll let us in we'll plant a lot of things, and do no harm, we will indeed. And the nightingale will be here directly. Oh, don't give it away!"

My head was whirling now with the difficulty of persuading him, and I did not hear what he said across me to my father. But I heard Father's reply—"Tell her yourself, sir."

On which the Old Squire stuffed the big paper into my arms, and put his hand on my head and patted it.

"I told you I was a bad hand at talking, my dear," he said, "but Mary's Meadow is given away, and that's the Deed of Gift which you've got in your arms, drawn up as tight as any rascal of a lawyer can do it, and that's not so tight, I believe, but what some other rascal of a lawyer could undo it. However, they may let you alone. For I've given it to you, my dear, and it is yours. So you can plant, and play, and do what

you please there. 'You, and your heirs and assigns, for ever,' as the rascals say."

It was my turn now to be speechless. But as I stared blankly in front of me, I saw that Father had come round, and was looking at me through his eye-glass. He nodded to me, and said, "Yes, Mary, the Squire has given Mary's Meadow to you, and it is yours."

* * * * * * *

Nothing would induce the Old Squire to take it back, so I had to have it, for my very own. He said he had always been sorry he had spoken so roughly to me, but he could not say so, as he and Father were not on speaking terms. Just lately he was dining with Lady Catherine, to meet her cousins from the Barracks, and she was telling people after dinner about our game (rather mean of her, I think, to let out our secrets at a dinner party), and when he heard about my planting things in the hedges, he remembered what I had said. And next day he went to the place to look, and there were the hose-in-hose.

Oh, how delighted the others were when they heard that Mary's Meadow belonged to me.

"It's like having an Earthly Paradise given to you, straight off!" said Harry.

"And one that doesn't want weeding," said Adela.

"And oh, Mary, Mary!" cried Arthur. "Think of the yards and yards of top-spit. It does rejoice me to think I can go to you now when I'm making compost, and need not be beholden to that old sell-up-your-grandfather John for as much as would fill Adela's weeding basket, and that's about as small an article as anyone can make-believe with."

"It's very heavy when it's full," said Adela.

"Is everything hers?" asked Christopher. "Is the grass hers, and the trees hers, and the hedges hers, and the rooks hers, and the starling hers, and will the nightingale be hers when he comes home, and if she could dig through to the other side of the world, would there be a field the same size in Australia that would be hers, and are the sheep hers, and——"

"For mercy's sake stop that catalogue, Chris," said Father. "Of course the sheep are not hers; they were moved yesterday. By-the-bye, Mary, I don't know what you propose to do with your property, but if you like to let it to me, I'll turn some sheep in to-morrow, and I'll pay

you so much a year, which I advise you to put into the Post Office Savings' Bank."

I couldn't fancy Mary's Meadow always without sheep, so I was too thankful; though at first I could not see that it was fair that dear Father should let me have his sheep to look pretty in my field for nothing, and pay me, too. He is always teasing me about my field, and he teases me a good deal about the Squire, too. He says we have set up another queer friendship in the family, and that the Old Squire and I are as odd a pair as Aunt Catherine and Chris.

I am very fond of the Old Squire now, and he is very kind to me. He wants to give me Saxon, but I will not accept him. It would be selfish. But the Old Squire says I had better take him, for we have quite spoilt him for a yard dog by petting him, till he has not a bit of savageness left in him. We do not believe Saxon ever was savage; but I daren't say so to the Old Squire, for he does not like you to think you know better than he does about anything. There is one other subject on which he expects to be humoured, and I am careful not to offend him. He cannot tolerate the idea that he might be supposed to have yielded to Father the point about which they went to law, in giving Mary's Meadow to me. He is always lecturing me on encroachments, and the abuse of privileges, and warning me to be very strict about trespassers on the path through Mary's Meadow; and now that the field *is* mine, nothing will induce him to walk in it without asking my leave. That is his protest against the decision from which he meant to appeal.

Though I have not accepted Saxon, he spends most of his time with us. He likes to come for the night, because he sleeps on the floor of my room, instead of in a kennel, which must be horrid, I am sure. Yesterday, the Old Squire said, "One of these fine days, when Master Saxon does not come home till morning, he'll find a big mastiff in his kennel, and will have to seek a home for himself where he can."

Chris has been rather whimsical lately. Father says Lady Catherine spoils him. One day he came to me, looking very peevish, and said, "Mary, if a hedgehog should come and live in one of your hedges, Michael says he would be yours, he's sure. If Michael finds him, will you give him to me?"

"Yes, Chris; but what do you want with a hedgehog?"

"I want him to sleep by my bed," said Chris. "You have Saxon by your bed; I want something by mine. I want a hedgehog. I feel discontented without a hedgehog. I think I might have something the

matter with my brain if I didn't get a hedgehog pretty soon. Can I go with Michael and look for him this afternoon?" and he put his hand to his forehead.

"Chris, Chris!" I said, "you should not be so sly. You're a real slyboots. Double-stockings and slyboots." And I took him on my lap.

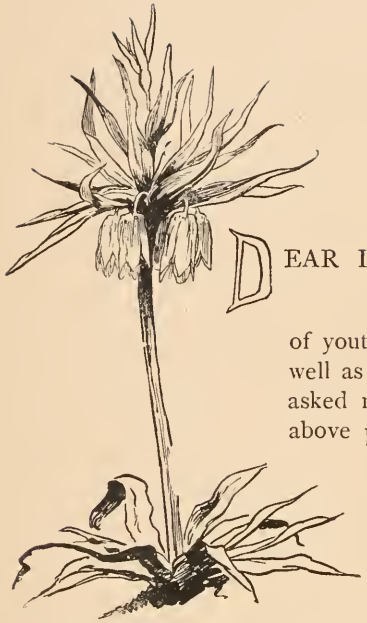
Chris put his arms round my neck, and buried his cheek against mine.

"I won't be sly, Mary," he whispered; and then, hugging me as he hugs Lady Catherine, he added, "For I do love you; for you are a darling, and I do really think it always was yours."

"What, Chris?"

"If not," said Chris, "why was it always called MARY'S MEADOW?"

LETTERS FROM A LITTLE GARDEN.



LETTER I.

"All is fine that is fit." – *Old Proverb.*

DEAR LITTLE FRIEND,

WHEN, with the touching confidence of youth that your elders have made-up as well as grown-up minds on all subjects, you asked my opinion on *Ribbon-gardening*, the above proverb came into my head, to the relief of its natural tendency to see an inconvenient number of sides to every question. The more I reflect upon it, the more I am convinced it is a comfortably compact confession of my faith on all matters decorative, and thence on the decoration of gardens.

I take some credit to myself for having the courage of my moderation, since you obviously expect a more sweeping reply. The bedding-out system is in bad odour just now; and you ask, "Wasn't it hideous?" and "Wasn't it hateful?" and "Will it ever come into fashion again, to the re-extermination of the dear old-fashioned flowers which we are now slowly, and with pains, recalling from banishment?"

To discover one's own deliberate opinion upon a subject is not always easy—prophetic opinions one must refuse to offer. But I feel no doubt whatever that the good lady who shall coddle this little garden at some distant date after me will be quite as fond of her borders as I am of mine; and I suspect that these will be about as like each other as our respective best bonnets.

The annals of Fashion must always be full of funny stories. I know two of the best amateur gardeners of the day; they are father and son. The father, living *and gardening* still (he sent me a specimen lily lately by parcel post, and is beholden to no one for help, either with packing or addressing, in his constant use of this new convenience), is making good way between ninety and a hundred years of age. What we call old-fashioned flowers were the pets of his youth. About the time when ribbon-bordering "came in," he changed his residence, and, in the garden where he had cultivated countless kinds of perennials, his son reigned in his stead. The horticultural taste proved hereditary, but in the younger man it took the impress of the fashion of his day. Away went the "herbaceous stuff" on to rubbish heaps, and the borders were soon gay with geraniums, and kaleidoscopic with calceolarias. But "the whirligig of Time brings in his revenges," and, perhaps, a real love for flowers could never, in the nature of things, have been finally satisfied by the dozen or by the score; so it came to pass that the garden is once more herbaceous, and far-famed as such. The father—a *perennial* gardener in more senses than one, long may he flourish!—has told me, chuckling, of many a penitential pilgrimage to the rubbish-heaps, if haply fragments could be found of the herbaceous treasures which had been so rashly cast away.

Doubtless there were many restorations. Abandoned "bedding stuff" soon perishes, but uprooted clumps of "herbaceous stuff" linger long in shady corners, and will sometimes flower pathetically on the heap where they have been thrown to rot.

I once saw a fine "Queen Anne" country house—an old one; not a modern imitation. Chippendale had made the furniture. He had worked in the house. Whether the chairs and tables were beautiful or not is a matter of taste, but they were well made and seasoned; so, like the herbaceous stuff, they were hardy. The next generation decided that they were ugly. New chairs and tables were bought, and the Chippendale "stuff" was sent up into the maids' bedrooms, and down to the men's. It drifted into the farmhouses and cottages on the estate. No doubt, a good deal was destroyed. The caprices of fashion are not confined to one class, and the lower classes are the more prodigal and destructive. I have seen the remains of Elizabethan bedsteads under hay-ricks, and untold "old oak" has fed the cottage fire. I once asked a village maiden why the people made firewood of carved arm-chairs, when painted pinewood, upholstered in American cloth, is, if

lovelier, not so lasting. Her reply was—"They get stalled on* 'em." And she added: "Maybe a man 'll look at an old arm chair that's stood on t' hearth-place as long as he can remember, and he'll say—'I'm fair sick o' t' seet o' *yon*. We mun have a new 'un for t' Fëast. *I'll chop thee oop!*'"

Possibly some of the Chippendale chairs also fell to the hatchet and fed the flames, but most of them bore neglect as well as hardy perennials, and when Queen Anne houses and "old Chips" came into fashion again, there was routing and rummaging from attic to cellar, in farmhouse and cottage, and the banished furniture went triumphantly back to its own place.

I first saw single dahlias in some "little gardens" in Cheshire, five or six years ago. No others had ever been cultivated there. In these quiet nooks the double dahlia was still a new-fangled flower. If the single dahlias yet hold their own, those little gardens must now find themselves in the height of the floral fashion, with the unusual luck of the conservative old woman who "wore her bonnet till the fashions came round again."

It is such little gardens which have kept for us the Blue Primrose, the highly fragrant Summer Roses (including Rose de Meaux, and the red and copper Briar), countless beautiful varieties of Daffy-down-dillies, and all the host of sweet, various and hardy flowers which are now returning, like the Chippendale chairs, from the village to the hall.

It is still in cottage gardens chiefly that the Crown Imperial hangs its royal head. One may buy small sheaves of it in the Taunton market-place on early summer Saturdays What a stately flower it is! and, in the paler variety, of what an exquisite yellow! I always fancy *Fritillaria Imperialis flava* to be dressed in silk from the Flowery Land—that robe of imperial yellow which only General Gordon and the blood royal of China are entitled to wear!

"All is fine that is fit." And is the "bedding-out" system—Ribbon-gardening—ever fit, and therefore ever fine? My little friend, I am inclined to think that it sometimes is. For long straight borders in parks and public promenades, for some terrace gardens on a large scale, viewed perhaps from windows at a considerable distance, and, in

* "Stalled on" = tired of. "T' fëast" = the village feast, an annual festival and fair, for which most houses in that district are cleaned within and whitewashed without.

a general way, for pleasure grounds ordered by professional skill, and not by an *amateur* gardener (which, mark you, being interpreted, is gardener *for love!*), the bedding-out style *is* good for general effect, and I think it is capable of prettier ingenuities than one often sees employed in its use. I think that, if I ever gardened in this expensive and mechanical style, I should make "arrangements," à la Whistler, with flowers of various shades of the same colour. But harmony and gradation of colour always give me more pleasure than contrast.

Then, besides the fitness of the gardening to the garden, there is the fitness of the garden to its owner; and the owner must be considered from two points of view, his taste and his means. Indeed, I think it would be fair to add a third, his leisure.

Now, there are owners of big gardens and little gardens, who like to have a garden (what Englishman does not?), and like to see it gay and tidy, but who don't know one flower from the rest On the other hand, some scientists are acquainted with botany and learned in horticulture. They know every plant and its value, but they care little about tidiness. Cut flowers are feminine frivolities in their eyes, and they count nosegays as childish gauds, like daisy chains and cowslips balls. They are not curious in colours, and do not know which flowers are fragrant and which are scentless. For them every garden is a botanical garden. Then, many persons fully appreciate the beauty and the scent of flowers, and enjoy selecting and arranging them for a room, who can't abide to handle a fork or meddle with mother earth. Others again, amongst whom I number myself, love not only the lore of flowers, and the sight of them, and the fragrance of them, and the growing of them, and the picking of them, and the arranging of them, but also inherit from Father Adam a natural relish for tilling the ground from whence they were taken and to which they shall return.

With little persons in little gardens, having also little strength and little leisure, this husbandry may not exceed the small uses of fork and trowel, but the earth-love is there, all the same. I remember once, coming among some family papers, upon an old letter from my grandmother to my grandfather. She was a clever girl (she did not outlive youth), and the letter was natural and full of energy and point. My grandfather seems to have apologized to his bride for the disorderly state of the garden to which she was about to go home, and in reply she quaintly and vehemently congratulates herself upon this unpromising fact. For——"I do so dearly love *grubbing*." This touches another

point. She was a botanist, and painted a little. So were most of the lady gardeners of her youth. The education of women was, as a rule, poor enough in those days; but a study of "the Linnean system" was among the elegant accomplishments held to "become a young woman"; and one may feel pretty sure that even a smattering of botanical knowledge, and the observation needed for third or fourth-rate flower-painting, would tend to a love of variety in beds and borders which Ribbon-gardening would by no means satisfy. *Lobelia erinus speciosa* does make a wonderfully smooth blue stripe in sufficient quantities, but that would not console any one who knew or had painted *Lobelia cardinalis*, and *fulgens* for the banishment of these from the garden.

I think we may dismiss Ribbon-gardening as unfit for a botanist, or for any one who happens to like *grubbing*, or tending his flowers.

Is it ever "fit" in a little garden?

Well, if the owner has either no taste for gardening, or no time, it may be the shortest and brightest plan to get some nurseryman near to fill the little beds and borders with spring bedding plants for spring (and let me note that this *spring bedding*, which is of later date than the first rage for ribbon-borders, had to draw its supplies very largely from "herbaceous stuff" *myosotis*, *viola*, *aubretia*, *iberis*, &c., and may have paved the way for the return of hardy perennials into favour), and with Tom Thumb Geranium, Blue Lobelia, and Yellow Calceolaria for the summer and autumn. These latter are most charming plants. They are very gay and persistent whilst they last, and it is not their fault that they cannot stand our winters. They are no invalids till frost comes. With my personal predilections, I like even "bedding stuff" best in variety. The varieties of what we call geraniums are many and most beautiful. I should always prefer a group of individual specimens to a band of one. And never have I seen the canary yellow of calceolarias to such advantage as in an "old-fashioned" rectory-garden in Yorkshire, where they were cunningly used as points of brilliancy at corners of beds mostly filled with "hardy herbaceous stuff."

But there, again, one begins to spend time and taste! Let us admit that, if a little garden must be made gay by the neighbouring nurseryman, it will look very bright, on the "ribbon" system, at a minimum cost of time and trouble—*but not of money!*

Even for a little garden, bedding plants are very expensive. For you must either use plenty, or leave it alone. A ragged ribbon-border can have no admirers.

If time and money are both lacking, and horticulture is not a hobby, divide what sum you are prepared to spend on your little garden in two. Lay out half in making good soil, and spend the rest on a limited range of hardy plants. If mother earth is well fed, and if you have got her *deep down*, and not a surface layer of half a foot on a substratum of builder's rubbish, she will take care of every plant you commit to her hold. I should give up the back of the borders (if the aspect is east or south) to a few very good "perpetual" roses to cut from; dwarfs, not standards; and for the line of colour in front it will be no great trouble to arrange roughly to have red, white, blue, and yellow alternately.

One of the best cheap bedders is Pink Catchfly (*Silene pendula*). Its rosy cushions are as neat and as lasting as Blue Lobelia. It is a hardy annual, but the plants should be autumn sown of the year before. It flowers early and long, and its place might be taken for the autumn by scarlet dwarf nasturtiums, or clumps of geranium. Pink Catchfly, Blue Forget-me-not, White Arabis, and Yellow Viola would make gay any spring border. Then to show, to last, and to cut from, few flowers rival the self-coloured pansies (Viola class). Blue, white, purple, and yellow alternately, they are charming, and if in good soil, well-watered in drought, and constantly cut from, they bloom the whole summer long. And some of them are very fragrant. The secret of success with these is never to leave a flower to go to seed. They are not cut off by autumnal frosts. On the contrary, you can take them up, and divide, and reset, and send a portion to other little gardens where they are lacking.

All mine (and they have been very gay this year and very sweet) I owe to the bounty of friends who garden *non sibi sed toti*.

Lastly, if there is even a very little taste and time to spare, surely nothing can be so satisfactory as a garden full of such flowers as (in the words of John Parkinson) "our English ayre will permitt to be noursed up." Bearing in mind these counsels:

Make a wise selection of hardy plants. Grow only good sorts, and of these choose what suit your soil and climate. Give them space and good feeding. Disturb the roots as little as possible, and cut the flowers constantly. Then they will be fine as well as fit.

Good-bye, Little Friend,

Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

"The tropics may have their delights; but they have not turf, and the world without turf is a dreary desert. The original Garden of Eden could not have had such turf as one sees in England.

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"Woman always did, from the first, make a muss in a garden.

* * * * * * * *

"Nevertheless, what a man needs in gardening is a cast-iron back, with a hinge in it."

Pusley; or, My Summer in a Garden.—C. D. Warner.

Dear Little Friend,

DO you know the little book from which these sayings are quoted? It is one you can laugh over by yourself, again and again. A very good specimen of that curious, new-world kind of wit — American humour; and also full of the truest sense of natural beauty and of gardening delights.

Mr. Warner is not complimentary to woman's work in the garden, though he displays all the graceful deference of his countrymen to the weaker sex. In the charming dedication to his wife, whilst desiring "to acknowledge an influence which has lent half the charm to my labour," he adds: "If I were in a court of justice, or injustice, under oath, I should not like to say that, either in the wooing days of spring, or under the suns of the summer solstice, you had been, either with hoe, rake, or miniature spade, of the least use in the garden." Perhaps our fair cousins on the other side of the Atlantic do not *grub* so energetically as we do. Certainly, with us it is very common for the ladies of the family to be the practical

gardeners, the master of the house caring chiefly for a good general effect, with tidy walks and grassplots, and displaying less of that almost maternal solicitude which does bring flowers to perfection.

I have sometimes thought that it would be a good division of labour in a Little Garden, if, where Joan coddles the roses and rears the seedlings, Darby would devote some of his leisure to the walks and grassplots.

Few things in one's garden are pleasanter to one's own eye, or gain more admiration from others, than well-kept turf. Green grass is one of the charms of the British Isles, which are emerald isles throughout, though Ireland is so *par excellence*. It is so much a matter of course to us that we hardly realize this till we hear or read what foreigners say about it, and also our own American and colonial cousins. We go abroad and revel in real sunshine, and come home with glowing memories to abuse our own cloudy skies; but they come from burnt-up landscapes to refresh their eyes with our perpetual green.

Even a little grassplot well repays pains and care. If you have to make it, never use cheap seed. Buy the very best from seedsmen of repute, or you will get a conglomeration of weeds instead of a greensward of fine grasses and white clover. Trench the ground to an *even* depth, tread it firm, and have light, finely-sifted soil uppermost. Sow thickly early in April, cover lightly, and protect from birds. If the soil is good, and the seed first-rate, your sward will be green the first season.

Turfs make a lawn somewhat quicker than seed. The best are cut from the road-side, but it is a hateful despoiling of one of the fairest of travellers' joys. Those who commit this highway robbery should reckon themselves in honour bound to sow the bare places they leave behind. Some people cut the pieces eighteen inches square, some about a yard long and twelve inches wide. Cut thin, roll up like thin bread and butter. When they are laid down, fit close together, like bits of a puzzle, and roll well after laying. If they gape with shrinking, fill in between with finely sifted soil, and roll again and again.

Strictly speaking, a grassplot should be all grass, grass and a little white clover. "Soldiers" (of the plantain type) are not to be tolerated on a lawn, but I have a weak corner for dog-daisies. I once owned a little garden in Canada, but never a dog-daisy grew there. A lady I knew had one—in a pot—sent from "Home." But even if you have a sentimental fondness for "the pretty things" (as their botanical name signifies), and like to see their little white faces peeping out of the grass

this must not be carried too far. In some soils dog-daisies will soon devour the whole lawn.

How are they, and "soldiers," and other weeds to be extirpated? There are many nostrums, but none so effectual as a patient digging up (with a long "daisy fork") of plant after plant *by the roots*. The whole family party and any chance visitors will not be too many for the work, and, if each labourer is provided with a cast-iron back with a hinge in it, so much the better. A writer in the *Garden* seems to have been very successful with salt, used early in the season and with great care. He says: "After the first cutting in the spring put as much salt on each weed, through the palm of the hand, as will distinctly cover it. In two or three days, depending on the weather, they will turn brown. Those weeds that have escaped can be distinctly seen, and the operation should be repeated. The weeds thus treated die, and in about three weeks the grass will have grown, and there will not be a vestige of disturbance left. Two years ago I converted a rough pasture into a tennis-ground for six courts. Naturally the turf was a mass of rough weeds. It took three days to salt them, and the result was curiously successful."

Another prescription is to cut off the crowns of the offending plants, and dose them with a few drops of carbolic acid.

Grass will only grow dense by constant cutting and moisture. The scythe works best when the grass is wet, and the machine when it is dry. Sweep it and roll it during the winter. Pick off stones, sticks, or anything that "has no business" on it, as you would pick "bits" off a carpet.

If grass grows rank and coarse, a dressing of sand will improve it; if it is poor and easily burned up, give it a sprinkling of soot, or guano, or wood ashes (or all three mixed) before rain. "Slops" are as welcome to parched grass as to half-starved flowers If the weather is hot and the soil light, it is well occasionally to leave the short clippings of one mowing upon the lawn to protect the roots.

I do not know if it becomes unmanageable, but, in moderation, I think camomile a very charming intruder on a lawn, and the aromatic scent which it yields to one's tread to be very grateful in the open air. It is pleasant, too, to have a knoll or a bank somewhere, where thyme can grow among the grass. But the subject of flowers that grow well through grass is a large one It is one also on which the members of our Parkinson Society would do kindly to give us any exceptional expe-

riences, especially in reference to flowers which not only flourish among grass, but do not resent being mown down. The lovely blue windflower (*Anemone Apennina*) is, I believe, one of these.

There is no doubt that now and then plants prefer to meet with a little resistance, and despise a bed that is made too comfortable. Self-sown ones often come up much more vigorously through the hard path than when the seed has fallen within the border. The way to grow the parsley fern is said to be to clap a good big stone on his crown very early in the spring, and let him struggle out at all corners from underneath it. It is undoubtedly a comfort to rock-plants and creeping things to be planted with a stone over their feet to keep them cool!

Which reminds me of stones for bordering. I think they make the best of all edgings for a Little Garden. Box-edgings are the prettiest, but they are expensive, require good keeping, and harbour slugs. For that matter, most things seem to harbour slugs in any but a very dry climate, and there are even more prescriptions for their destruction than that of lawn weeds. I don't think lime does much, nor soot. Wet soon slakes them. Thick slices of turnip are attractive. Slugs really do seem to like them, even better than one's favourite seedlings. Little heaps of bran also, and young lettuces. My slugs do not care for cabbage leaves, and they are very untidy. Put thick slices of turnip near your auriculas, favourite primroses and polyanthuses, and Christmas roses, and near anything tender and not well established, and overhaul them early in the morning. "You can't get up too early, if you have a garden," says Mr. Warner; and he adds: "Things appear to go on in the night in the garden uncommonly. It would be less trouble to stay up than it is to get up so early!"

To return to stone edgings. When quite newly laid, like miniature rockwork, they are, perhaps, the least bit cockneyfied, and suggestive of something between oyster-shell borderings and mock ruins. But this effect very rapidly disappears as they bury themselves in cushions of pink catch-fly (v. *compacta*), or low-growing pinks, tiny campanulas, yellow viola, London pride, and the vast variety of rock-plants, "alpines," and low-growing "herbaceous stuff," which delight in squeezing up to a big cool stone that will keep a little moisture for their rootlets in hot summer weather. This is a much more interesting kind of edging than any one kind of plant can make, I think, and in a Little Garden it is like an additional border, leaving the other free for bigger plants. If one kind is preferred, for a light soil there is nothing like thrift. And

the white thrift is very silvery and more beautiful than the pink. There is a large thrift, too, which is handsome. But I prefer stones, and I like varieties of colour—bits of grey boulder, and red and yellow sandstone.

I like warm colour also on the walks. I should always have red walks if I could afford them There is a red material, the result of some process of burning which we used to get in the iron and coal districts of Yorkshire, which I used to think very pretty, but I do not know what it is called.

Good walks are a great luxury. It is a wise economy to go round your walks after rain and look for little puddles; make a note of where the water lodges and fill it up. Keep gratings swept. If the grating is free and there is an overflow not to be accounted for, it is very possible that a drain-pipe somewhere is choke-full of the roots of some tree.

Some people advise hacking up your walks from time to time, and other people advise you not. Some people say there is nothing like salt to destroy walk weeds and moss, and brighten the gravel, and some people say that salt in the long run feeds the ground and the weeds. I am disposed to think that, in a Little Garden, there is nothing like a weeding woman with an old knife and a little salt afterwards. It is also advisable to be your own weeding woman, that you may be sure that the weeds come up by the roots! Next to the cast-iron back before mentioned, I recommend a housemaid's kneeling mat (such as is used for scrubbing floors), as a gardener's comfort.

I hope, if you have been bulb planting, that you got them all in by Lord Mayor's Day. Whether bulbs should be planted deep or shallow is another "vexed question." In a Little Garden, where you don't want to disturb them, and may like to plant out some small rooted annuals on the top of them later on, I should plant deep.

If you are planting roses, remember that two or three, carefully planted in good stuff that goes deep, will pay you better than six times the number stuck *into a hole* in cold clay or sand or builders' rubbish, and left to push their rootlets as best they can, or perish in the attempt. Spread out these rootlets very tenderly when planting. You will reap the reward of your gentleness in flowers. Rose roots don't like being squeezed, like a Chinese lady's feet. I was taught this by one who knows,—He has a good name for the briar suckers and sprouts which I hope you carefully cut off from your grafted roses,—He calls it "the old Adam!"

Yours, &c.

LETTER III.

A good rule
Is a good tool.

DEAR LITTLE FRIEND,

JANUARY is not a month in which you are likely to be doing much in your little garden. Possibly a wet blanket of snow lies thick and white over all its hopes and anxieties. No doubt you made all tidy, and some things warm, for the winter, in the delicious opportunities of S. Luke's and S. Martin's little summers, and, like the amusing American I told you of, "turned away writing *resurgam* on the gate-post."

I write *resurgam* on labels, and put them wherever bulbs lie buried, or such herbaceous treasures as die down, and are, in consequence, too often treated as mere mortal remains of the departed, by the undiscriminating hand of the jobbing gardener.

Winter is a good time to make plans, and to put them down in your Garden-book. Have you a Garden-book? A note-book, I mean, devoted to garden memoranda. It is a very useful kind of commonplace book, and soon becomes as fascinating as autumn and spring catalogues.

One has to learn to manage even a Little Garden chiefly by experience, which is slow teaching, if sure. Books and gardeners are helpful; but, like other doctors, they differ. I think one is often slower to learn anything than one need be, from not making at once for first

principles. If one knew more of these, it would be easier to apply one's own experience, and to decide amid conflicting advice.

Here are a few rough and ready "first principles" for you.

Hardy flowers in hedges and ditches are partly fed, and are also covered from cold and heat, and winds, and drought, by fallen leaves and refuse. Hardy flowers in gardens have all this tidied away from them, and, being left somewhat hungry and naked in proportion, are all the better for an occasional top-dressing and mulching, especially in autumn. It is not absolutely necessary to turn a flower border upside down and dig it over every year. It may (for some years at any rate), if you find this more convenient, be treated on the hedge system, and *fed from the top;* thinning big clumps, pulling up weeds, moving and removing in detail.

Concentrated strength means large blooms. If a plant is ripening seed, some strength goes to that; if bursting into many blooms, some goes to each of them; if it is trying to hold up against blustering winds, or to thrive on exhausted ground, or to straighten out cramped and clogged roots, these struggles also demand strength. Moral: Plant carefully, support your tall plants, keep all your plants in easy circumstances, don't put them to the trouble of ripening seed (unless you specially want it). To this end cut off fading flowers, and also cut off buds in places where they would not show well when they came out, and all this economized strength will go into the blossoms that remain.

You cannot grow everything. Grow what suits your soil and climate, and the best kinds of these, as well as you can. You may make soil to suit a plant, but you cannot make the climate to suit it, and some flowers are more fastidious about the air they breathe than about the soil they feed upon. There are, however, scores of sturdy, handsome flowers, as hardy as highlanders, which will thrive in almost any soil, and under all the variations of climate of the British Isles. Some will even endure the smoke-laden atmosphere of towns and town suburbs; which, sooner or later, is certain death to so many. It is a pity that small florists and greengrocers in London do not know more about this; and it would be a great act of kindness to them and to their customers to instruct them. Then, instead of encouraging the ruthless slaughter of primroses, scores and hundreds of plants of which are torn up and then sold in a smoky atmosphere to which they never adapt themselves, these small shopkeepers might offer plants of the many beautiful varieties of poppies, from the grand *Orientalis* onwards, chrysanthemums, stocks, wall-flowers,

Canterbury bells, salvias, œnotheras, snapdragons, perennial lobelias, iris, and other plants which are known to be very patient under a long course of soot. Most of the hardy Californian annuals bear town life well. Perhaps because they have only to bear it for a year. *Convolvulus major*—the Morning Glory, as our American cousins so prettily call it—flourishes on a smutty wall as generously as the Virginian creeper.

North borders are safest in winter. They are free from the dangerous alternation of sunshine and frost. Put things of doubtful hardihood under a north wall, with plenty of sandy soil or ashes over their roots, some cinders on that, and perhaps a little light protection, like bracken, in front of them, and their chances will not be bad. Apropos to tender things, if your little garden is in a cold part of the British Isles, and has ungenial conditions of soil and aspect, don't try to keep tender things out of doors in winter; but, if it is in the south or west of the British Isles, I should be tempted to very wide experiments with lots of plants not commonly reckoned "hardy." Where laurels flower freely you will probably be successful eight years out of ten. Most fuchsias, and tender things which *die down*, may be kept.

Very little will keep Jack Frost out, if he has not yet been in, either in the garden or the house. A "hot bottle" will keep frost out of a small room where one has stored geraniums, &c., so will a small paraffin lamp (which—N.B—will also keep water-pipes from catastrophe.) How I have toiled, in my young days, with these same hot water bottles in a cupboard off the nursery, which was my nearest approach to a greenhouse! And how sadly I have experienced that where Mr. Frost goes out Mr. Mould is apt to slink in! Truly, as Mr. Warner says, "the gardener needs all the consolations of a high philosophy!"

It is a great satisfaction if things *will* live out of doors. And in a *little* garden a good deal of coddling may be done. I am going to get some round fruit hampers to turn over certain tender pets this winter. When one has one's flowers by the specimen and not by the score, such cossetting is possible. Ashes and cinders are excellent protection for the roots, and for plants—like roses—which do not die back to the earth level, and which sometimes require a screen as well as a quilt; bracken, fir branches, a few pea sticks, and matting or straw are all handy helps. The old gentleman who ran out—without his dressing gown—to fling his own bed-quilt over some plants endangered by an unexpected frost, came very near to having a fine show of bloom and not being there to see it. but, short of this excessive zeal, when one'

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garden is a little one, and close to one's threshold, one may catch Jack Frost on the surface of many bits of rough and ready fencing on very cold nights.

In drought, one good soaking with tepid water is worth six sprinklings. Watering is very fatiguing, but it is unskilled labour, and one ought to be able to hire strong arms to do it at a small rate. But I never met the hired person yet who could be persuaded that it was needful to do more than make the surface of the ground look as if it had been raining.

There is a "first principle" of which some gardeners are very fond, but in which I do not believe, that if you begin to water you must go on, and that too few waterings do harm. What I don't believe is that they do harm, nor did I ever meet with a gardener who complained of an odd shower, even if the skies did not follow it up. An odd sprinkling does next to no good, but an odd soaking may save the lives of your plants. In very hot weather don't grudge a few waterings to your polyanthuses and primroses. If they are planted in open sunny borders with no shade or hedge-mulching, they suffer greatly from drought.

Flowers, like human beings, are, to some extent, creatures of habit. They get used to many things which they can't at all abide once in a way. If your little garden (like mine) is part of a wandering establishment, here to-day and there to-morrow, you may get even your roses into very good habits of moving good-humouredly, and making themselves quickly at home. If plants from the first are accustomed to being moved about,—every year, or two years,—they do not greatly resent it. A real "old resident," who has pushed his rootlets far and wide, and never tried any other soil or aspect, is very slow to settle elsewhere, even if he does not die of *nostalgia* and nervous shock! In making cuttings, consider the habits and customs of the parent plant. If it has been grown in heat, the cuttings will require heat to start them. And so on, as to dry soil or moist, &c. If somebody gives you "a root" in hot weather, or a bad time for moving, when you have made your hole pour water in very freely. Saturate the ground below, "puddle in" your plants with plenty more, and you will probably save it, especially if you turn a pot or basket over it in the heat of the day. In warm weather plant in the evening, the new-comers then have a round of the clock in dews and restfulness before the sun is fierce enough to make them flag. In cold weather move in the morning, and

for the same period they will be safe from possible frost. Little, if any, watering is needed for late autumn plantings.

Those parts of a plant which are not accustomed to exposure are those which suffer from it. You may garden bare-handed in a cold wind and not be the worse for it, but, if both your arms were bared to the shoulders, the consequences would probably be very different A bundle of rose-trees or shrubs will bear a good deal on their leaves and branches, but for every moment you leave their roots exposed to drying and chilling blasts they suffer. When a plant is out of the ground, protect its crown and its roots at once. If a plant is moved quickly, it is advantageous, of course, to take it up with as much earth as possible, if the roots remain undisturbed in their little plat. Otherwise, earth is no better than any other protection; and in sending plants by post, &c. (when soil weighs very heavily), it is better to wash every bit of soil out of the roots, and then thoroughly wrap them in moss, and outside that in hay or tow, or cotton wool. Then, if the roots are comfortably spread in nice mould at the other end of the journey, all should go well.

I reserve a sneaking credulity about "lucky fingers." Or rather, I should say, a belief that some people have a strange power (or tact) in dealing with the vegetable world, as others have in controlling and coaxing animals.

It is a vivid memory of my childhood that (amongst the box-edged gardens of a family of eight), that of my eldest brother was almost inconvenienced by the luck of his fingers. "Survival of the fittest" (if hardiest does mean fittest!) kept the others within bounds; but what he begged, borrowed, and stole, survived, all of it, conglomerate around the "double velvet" rose, which formed the centrepiece. We used to say that when the top layer was pared off, a buried crop came up.

An old friend with lucky fingers visited my Little Garden this autumn. He wanders all over the world, and has no garden of his own except window-boxes in London, where he seems to grow what he pleases He is constantly doing kindnesses, and likes to do them his own way. He christened a border (out of which I had not then turned the builders' rubbish) Desolation Border, with more candour than compliment. He said it wanted flowers, and he meant to sow some. I suggested that, sown at that period of the summer, they would not flower this season. He said they would. (They did.) None of my suggestions met with favour, so I became gratefully passive, and watched

the lucky fingers from a distance, fluttering small papers, and making mystic deposits here and there, through the length and breadth of the garden. I only begged him to avoid my labels. The seeds he sowed ranged from three (rather old) seeds of bottle gourd to a packet of mixed Virginian stock. They all came up. He said, "I shall put them in where I think it is desirable, and when they come up you'll see where they are." I did.

For some days after his departure, on other country visits, I received plants by post. Not in tins, or boxes, but in envelopes with little or no packing. In this way came sea lavender in full bloom, crimson monkey plant from the London window box, and cuttings of mesembryanthemum. They are all alive and thriving!

The bottle gourd and the annuals have had their day, and it is over; but in the most unexpected places there still rise, like ghosts, certain plants which completely puzzle me.* They have not blossomed, but they grow on in spite of frost. Some of them are nearly as tall as myself. They almost alarm me when I am dividing violas, and trifling with Alpines. They stand over me (without sticks) and seem to say, "We are up, you see where we are! We shall grow as long as we think it desirable."

Farewell for the present, Little Friend.

Yours, &c.

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* When fully grown these plants proved to be the Tree-Mallow, *Lavatera arborea*, the seeds were gathered from specimens on the shores of the Mediterranean.

LETTER IV.

When Candlemas Day is come and gone,
The snow lies on a hot stone.—*Old Saw.*

DEAR LITTLE FRIEND,

AMONG all the changes and chances of human life which go to make up fiction as well as fact, there is one change which has never chanced to any man ; and yet the idea has been found so fascinating by all men that it appears in the literature of every country. Most other fancied transformations are recorded as facts somewhere in the history of our race. Poor men have become rich, the beggar has sat among princes, the sick have been made whole, the dead have been raised, the neglected man has awoke to find himself famous, rough and kindly beasts have been charmed by lovely ladies into very passable Princes, and it would be hard to say that the ugly have not seen themselves beautiful in the mirror of friendly eyes ; but the old have never become young. The elixir of youth has intoxicated the imagination of many, but no drop of it has ever passed human lips.

If we ever do just taste anything of the vital, hopeful rapture, the elastic delight of the old man of a fairy tale, who leaves his cares, his crutches, and his chimney-corner, to go forth again young amongst the young,—it is when the winter is ended and the spring is come. Some people may feel this rising of the sap of life within them more than others, but there are probably very few persons whom the first mild airs and bursting buds and pushing flower-crowns do not slightly intoxicate with a sort of triumphant pleasure.

What then, dear little friend, must be the February feelings of the owner of a Little Garden? Knowing, as we do, every plant and its place,—having taken just pride in its summer bloom,—having preserved this by cares and trimmings and proppings to a picturesque and florid autumn, though wild flowers have long been shrivelled and shapeless,—having tidied it up and put a little something comforting round it when bloom and outline were absolutely no more: what must we feel when we first detect the ruddy young shoots of our favourite pœonies, or perceive that the brown old hepaticas have become green and young again and are full of flower-buds?

The process of strolling, with bent back and peering eyes, by the side of the still frosty borders is so deeply interesting, and a very little sunshine on a broad band of crocuses has such a summer-like effect, that one is apt to forget that it is one of the cheapest ways of catching cold. The last days of the gardening year not unfrequently lead from the flower-bed to the sick-bed. But though there is for susceptible folk a noxious influence in the decaying vegetation of autumn, from which spring is free, there is bitter treachery in many a spring wind, and the damp of the ground seems to reek with the exuding chill of all the frosts that have bound it in mid-winter.

I often wonder that, for some exigencies of weather, the outdoor red-flannel knickerbockers which one wears in Canada are not more in use here. The very small children have all their clothes stuffed into them, and tumble safely about in the snow like little Dutchman. Older wearers of petticoats cram all in except the outermost skirt. It is a very simple garment made of three pieces,—two (straight) legs and a large square. The square is folded like a kerchief, and the leg pieces attached to the two sloping sides. A broad elastic and small openings on each side and at the top enable these very baggy knickerbockers to be easily pulled on for going out (where they effectually exclude cold exhalations from snow or damp ground), and pulled off on coming in.

Short of such coddling as this, I strongly urge fleecy cork socks inside your garden boots; and I may add that if you've never tried them, you can have no idea of the warmth and comfort of a pair of boy's common yellow-leather leggings, but the buttons will require some adjusting.

Of course, very robust gardeners are independent of these troublesome considerations; but the gardening members of a family, whether young or old, are very often not those vigorous people who can enjoy their fresh air at unlimited tennis or a real good stretching walk over the hills. They are oftener those weaker vessels who have to be content with strolls, and drives, and sketching, and "pottering about the garden."

Now, pottering about the garden in spring and autumn has many risks for feeble vitalities, and yet these are just the seasons when everything requires doing, and there is a good hour's work in every yard of a pet border any day. So *verbum sap.* One has to "pay with one's person" for most of one's pleasures, if one is delicate; but it is possible to do a great deal of equinoctial grubbing with safety and even benefit, if one is very warmly protected, especially about the feet and legs. These details are very tedious for young people, but not so tedious as being kept indoors by a cold.

And not only must delicate gardeners be cossetted with little advantages at these uncertain seasons, the less robust of the flowers gain equally by timely care. Jack Frost comes and goes, and leaves many plants (especially those planted the previous autumn) half jumped out of the ground. Look out for this, and tread them firmly in again. A shovel-full of cinder-siftings is a most timely attention round the young shoots of such as are poking up their noses a little too early, and seem likely to get them frost-bitten. Most alpines and low-growing stuff will bear light rolling after the frost has unsettled them. This is done is large gardens, but in a Little Garden they can be attended to individually. Give a little protection to what is too forward in growth, or badly placed, or of doubtful hardihood, or newly planted. Roses and hardy perennials can be planted in open weather.

But you will not really be very busy outside till March, and we are not concerning ourselves with what has to be done "in heat," where a good deal is going on.

Still, in mild climates or seasons (and one must always remember how greatly the British Isles vary in parts, as to climate), the idea of seedlings and cuttings will begin to stir our souls, when February "fills

dike," if it is "with black and not with white," *i.e.*, with rain and not snow. So I will just say that for a Little Garden, and a mixed garden, demanding patches, not scores of things, you can raise a wonderfully sufficient number of half-hardy things in an ordinary room, with one or two bell-glasses to give the moist atmosphere in which sitting-rooms are wanting. A common tumbler will cover a dozen "seedlings," and there you have two nice little clumps of half a dozen plants each, when they are put out. (And mind you leave them space to spread.) A lot of little cuttings can be rooted in wet sand. Hard-wooded cuttings may grow along slowly in cool places; little juicy soft ones need warmth, damp, and quick pushing forward. The very tips of fuchsias grow very easily struck early in wet sand, and will flower the same year. Kind friends will give you these, and if they will also give you "tips" of white, yellow, and blue Marguerites (this last is *Agathea celestis*), these strike as easily as chrysanthemums, and are delightful afterwards to cut from. They are not very tender, though not quite hardy.

For the few pots and pans and boxes of cuttings and seedlings which you require, it is well worth while to get a small stock of good compost from a nursery gardener; leaf mould, peat, and sand, whether for seedlings or cuttings. Always *sink* your pot in a second covering. Either have your pots sunk in a box of sand, which you can keep damp, or have small pots sunk in larger ones. A *great coat* to prevent evaporation, in some shape, is invaluable.

Yours, &c.,

J. H. E.

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